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Indian Gods and Goddesses

The Early Deities from Chalcolithic to Beginning of Historical Period

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Vol. 1

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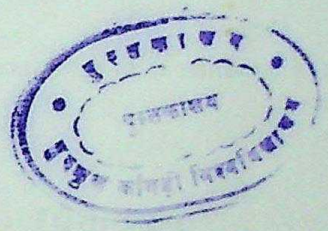

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B.R. Publishing Corporation
(A Division of BRPC (India) Ltd.)
Delhi-110052

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ISBN 81-7646-032-X (Set)
ISBN 81-7646-033-8 (Vol. I)

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Published by:
B.R. Publishing Corporation
[A Division of BRPC (India) Ltd.]
A-6, Nimri Commercial Centre
Near Bharat Nagar, Ashok Vihar
Delhi-110052
Phone: 3259196, 3259648
E-Mail: brpcltd@del2.vsnl.net.in

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NAG—I.1

Laser Typeset at:
Sita Composers Pvt. Ltd.
Delhi-110052

Printed at
Santosh Offset Press

PRINTED IN INDIA

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Preface

From the time immemorial, man has been worshipping the forces, which he was unable to well conceive or were beyond his reach. What is worship (or adoration)? This word can hardly be fully translated into any language, purposefully. Originally it implied acts prompted by veneration but with the stress of weight of the usage it has come to be applied to the whole range of religious behaviour, so that one might well say that the worship is the active side of the religion. Even so, the meaning does not stop with the notion of the act; it is the belief that stays the attitude; it is the family which empowers the belief. In each one of these guises, it is multiform and includes cult and taboo, rites sacramental and rites ascetics, indulgence and devotion, fast and penance; in its attitude it pairs off fear and love, dread and adoration, or it mingles them into the sense of awe; the sphere of its belief ranges from myth to philosophy, from creed to sciences; from passion for ideas to respect for truth and the faculty; it is said to be absent in some men. Nor can it be defined by its objects for in the context of worship, is included not only communion with the deity, but also traffic with the devil; while it cannot be separated from the intercourse of man with man. If we are to judge by phrase alone, its comprehensive complexity would by apparent; alongwith divine worship, the house of worship etc., besides the ancestor worship, devil worship, idol worship, nature worship, snake worship, tree worship and what not. The residual fact means to be that the world is catholic of all activities, physical, psychical and social, to which this adjective 'religious' can be applied; while by discourtesy, it passes on to every other kind of pursuit, that may be regarded as governed by a sufficiently intense interest, as "female-worship."

Indeed the sense of adoration and worship springs from the feeling of dependence upon other powers, from the awe caused in man's mind by the perception of supernatural agents, which influence his or others' welfare. The desire to gain their favour or to propitiate them, to call forth their sympathy; to appease or influence their wrath, had led man to invent that instrument of rite and spell which is thought to ensure or even to enforce their assistance. Rite and spell formed the centre of primitive belief and of institutions of religious or social character in ancient times. There is a school of thought, which believes that the strange and dangerous objects and phenomena as well as the fatal incidents added to the turning of the mind of the man towards worship of invisible forces. The vast material unearthed from the excavated sites point to the adoration of several gods and goddesses in the Chalcolithic period.

Of the prominent deities in adoration during the Harappan times have been Śiva, in the form of Paśupati and Śakti in the form of the Mother Goddess, in human as well in symbolical forms. The same Śiva is believed to have been present in the Vedic literature too, though in

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a different form as Rudra. Though with the pre-Harappan as well as the Indus people, he indeed was an important deity, but the philosophy behind his adoration is still a matter of conjecture. However, from the Vedic as well as the post-Vedic literature it could be evidenced that Śiva was conceived as the one representing renunciation, *yoga* and *jñāna*; and quite a number of spiritual aspirants were attracted towards him. But the leaders of the society were not well disposed towards him, which they naturally considered to be inimical to the true interest of the society. What is commonly known as the Vedic Age, was, from social, political and economic points of view an age of expansion, consolidation and organization; an age of progressive conquest and advancement, to the Indo-Aryan community. The cult of renunciation was not so popular at that stage of the development of the society. The not so enlightened leaders of the Vedic societies–the Prajāpatis, could not welcome the inroad of this cult of renunciation (*vairāgya*) and *mokṣa* (salvation) and the connected social indiscipline into the society. Śiva therefore did not enjoy a prominent position during the Vedic times. He was not popularly eulogised in the Vedic hymns and also did not enjoy the same excellence as other Vedic gods, did enjoy.

Apparently there were irreconcilable differences between the Vedic and Śaiva points of view. The Vedic ideal was achieving of *svarga* and Śaiva ideal was *mokṣa*. The Vedic *Sādhanā* was well-disciplined *karma* and the *Śaiva Sādhanā* was *yoga* and *prāṇa*. The Vedas stressed on the necessity of the due performance of the domestic as well as the social obligations or duties for the acquiring of superior merit. But Śaivism encouraged aspirants to disown domestic and social obligations and devote themselves to the intensive practice of austerity, self-concentration and meditation. This is exactly the position of Śiva, or Paśupati, who has been so gracefully depicted in the seals of Harappa and Mohenjodaro. He, like a great recluse is seated in meditation unmindful of the presence of the wild life around him. The height of his concentration could be witnessed from the fact that even the presence of the ferocious animals like rhinoceros and tiger has no effect on him. Therefore Śiva (or Paśupati as he been conceived) of the Indus sites was indeed a recluse or a hermit, who could meditate in the thick forest undeterred by his horrible surroundings. This form of Śiva has travelled through the ages reaching the modern times with slight variations, but his original position of being a recluse is indeed maintained. The dangerous events of every kind suggested to primitive men the existence of invincible spiritual powers in the universe, that at first only the cruel and destructive aspect attracted man's attention, whereas the fruitful and the beneficial one almost entirely escaped him, is though well founded otherwise, but is not in accordance with the facts as brought out in the Sanskrit texts, and need reconsideration in that respect or the Indian sacrifice must be assumed to have already passed this supposed stage of the primitive belief.

But no adoration or worship is possible without the deep sense of devotion. Though, it will be difficult to trace out the genesis of the sense of devotion or of *Bhakti* (as it was called in

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the later times) in practice during the pre-Harappan or Harappan times in India, or still further in the pre-historic times, but the idea of the worship in one form or the other was quite widespread with those people, (though their feelings possibly were not so deep rooted as we find in the later times) because according to Mackay, the objects of worship viz., the terracotta figurines were found in several houses at Mohenjodaro, sometimes placed over a bracket in a room or a raised stool. This seems to be the positive evidence of the faith in the cult deities or cult objects. The other evidence of the religious beliefs of the pre-Harappan and Harappan people is available in the use of amulets and *talismāns.* These artefacts were used apparently by the people of those times to tie them on their person to ward of evil or for achieving success. The popularity of the idea can be visualised from the large number of such objects recovered from the Harappan sites in the sub-continent.

Marshall mentions about the presence of the Talisman which is made of a clay like a tablet stamped with a seal impression, pierced with roughly made holes with the evident purpose of securing it to something possibly to the clothing. Several such tablets which were stamped on one side, have smooth backs; which shows that they had never adhered to anything, and, therefore, were not labels of merchandise. Many such objects were stamped on one side, which would be suitable as an amulet but could serve no other purpose. Some of them were coated with red slip, adding to their sanctity.

Besides some of the seals from the Harappan sites have been believed to represent the votive offering. It may be recalled here that many of the Buddhist sites in the country have produced votive objects like the votive seals, votive stupas and the votive tablets. The votive nature of these artefacts has been well established by the scholars. The practice of votive offerings of seals and amulets in the Buddhist sites were possibly borrowed from the Harappan finds. A remarkable aspect of Śaivisim has been the worship of lord Śiva in a symbolical form called *liṅga.* The very idea of *liṅ*ga implies that it is the seed or the source of the derivative existences. It is that in which all diversities remain dissolved, undifferentiated or potentially present, and from which they are originated. All existences are unified in *liṅga,* which is the ultimate ground and final end of phenomenal beings. Śiva is accordingly most appropriately represented as *liṅga.* Sometimes, in his static aspect he is represented as *liṅga* and in his dynamic aspect as the cause of origin, and as the power of multiplication, he is represented with *yoni* or śakti. In that case *liṅga* is conceived as the paternal principle or *yoni* or Śakti stands for the maternal principle. These two aspects are ultimately and metaphysically identical in Śiva, but in the phenomenal creation they are represented separately in relation to each other. The *liṅga* is usually placed upon *yoni. Liṅga* is the one, the changeless self-luminous spirit and *yoni* is the self-modifying creative energy. *Liṅga* is the self and *yoni* is the body. *Liṅga* is existence and *yoni* is expression. *Linga* is the principle of unity and *yoni* is the

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principle of self-multiplication. These words highlight a few aspects of the vast philosophy that hovers round the concept of *liṅga* and *yoni* in the Brahmanical literature.

However, *Liṅga* and *yoni* figurines were quite common in the Indus sites. Whether the ideology of the subsequent times relating to these symbolical forms, was popular with the Indus people and if so, to what extent, it would be difficult to state at this stage, but their very presence in such a remote past is quite significant. Interestingly the symbolical adoration of the present day symbols of Śiva, has its origin in the pre-Harappan and Harappan culture.

A man by nature is a worshipper of Śakti or Power. Wherever he finds a special manifestation of Śakti, his attention is drawn towards it and if it is found to be of a superior order in comparison with what he experiences in himself, he pays homage to it. The tribute of respect which a man offers to a superior manifestation of power may appear in diverse forms. Some manifestation of power may strike terror into his heart and others may inspire his heart with feelings of admiration and reverence. Some may be attractive while others may be repulsive. Some may rouse the spirit of fighting in him and others may charm him to willing self-surrender. The feeling of fear and hope, envy and admiration, awe and reverence, hostility and friendliness, repulsion and attraction etc., roused by the different forms of power, give rise to the different forms of worship. In all these cases, the sense of superiority of the power manifested is present and a tribute of respect is offered to it in some form or the other. But the inherent aspect of the adoration of the mother, who not only gives birth, but also after giving life feeds an infant, protects him and chides him also if need be. All these feelings were very well present in the society of such a remote past as the Indus Valley and other sites, which have produced innumerable female figurines. These were objects of reverence and strangely enough the goddess was adored as a pregnant mother, then mother with child, and in various other forms like:-

(i)	Mother Goddess	(v)	Śakambharī
(ii)	Earth Mother	(vi)	Lajjā Gaurī
(iii)	Tree Goddess	(vii)	Nursing Mother
(iv)	Eye Goddess	(viii)	Mother in the form of Śakti

Another interesting aspect of the cult antiquities of the Indus and other sites is the presence of composite forms, sacred animals and reptiles and several other cult forms which have been discussed at length in this work.

Incidentally, it may be added that this happens to be the first Volume of (the Cultural Heritage Series) on Indian deities, which deals mainly with deities and cults of the

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pre-Harappan and Harappan sites in the sub-continent. The accounts of other (deities) will follow in due course of time.

I am immensely indebted to J.C. Grover of the National Museum, for his kind help in various ways in the compilation of this work.

Shanti Lal Nagar

5th September, 1997

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Contents

	Preface	v
	List of Maps, Plates and Figures	xiii
1	**Introduction**	1
2	**Female Deities**	13
	I. The Mother Goddess	13
	II. Śakti Worship	40
	III. The Earth Mother or Earth Goddess	41
	IV. Śākambharī	47
	V. Tree Goddess	48
	VI. Lajjā Gaurī or Aditi	49
	VII. Eye Goddess	50
	VIII. Nursing Mother	50
3	**Male Deities**	55
	I. Śiva or Paśupati	55
	II. Two Headed Deity	64
	III. Linga Worship	65
	IV. Yama	69
4	**The Composite Forms**	73
	I. Human and Animal Forms	73
	(i) Half human and half serpent	73
	(ii) Half human and half bull	74
	(iii) Half woman and half tiger (or Durgā)	74
	II. Animals with Human Heads	75
	(i) Human faced elephant	75
	(ii) Human faced goat or ram	76
	III. Multi-Headed Animals	76
	IV. Other Composite Animals	77
	V. Human with Horns	78
	VI. Tiger-Leopard and Rhinoceros	78

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5	**Sacred Animals, Birds and Reptiles**	**81**
	I. Animals:- (i) Buffalo, (ii) Monkeys, (iii) Bull, (iv) Goat	81-91
	II. Acquatic Animals:- Tortoise, Crocodile	91-92
	III. Birds:- Peacock, Dove	92-94
	IV. Reptiles:- Snakes	94-95
6	**Tree Worship and Forest Deities**	**97**
7	**The Mythology**	**107**
8	**Forces of Nature and Their Adoration**	**111**
	I. The Fire (Agni)	111
	II. The Sun	116
	III. The Water	120
9	**Svāstika**	**123**
10	**Epilogue**	**129**
	Select Bibliography	139
	Index	141
	Plates	
	Figures	

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List of Maps, Plates and Figures

Maps

Map 1. Map showing the spread of the cult of the Mother Goddess in Indian Sub-continent and west Asian countries.

Map 2. Map showing the spread of the Harappan culture.

Plates

Pl. 1. Venus from Willindrof, upper Palaeolithic.

(a) Terracotta Mother Goddess figurines, Mehi, Baluchistan.

Pl. 2. *Yoni* symbol, Periano Ghundai, Baluchistan.

Pl. 3. Terracotta Mother Goddess with raised head-dress, Mohenjodaro.

Pl. 4. Terracotta Mother Goddess, profusely ornamented, Mohenjodaro.

Pl. 5. Terracotta Mother Goddess figurines. Mohenjodaro.

Pl. 6. Terracota Mother Goddess figurines, Mohenjodaro.

Pl. 7. Terracotta Mother Goddess figurines, Mohenjodaro.

Pl. 8. Bust of terracotta figurine of Mother Goddess with horned head-dress, Mohenjodaro.

Pl. 9. Pot bellied figurines of Mother Goddess, Mohenjodaro.

Pl. 10. (a) Terracotta figurine of Mother Goddess with raised head-dress and wearing ornaments, Harappa.

(b) Terracotta figurines of Mother Goddess with raised head-dress and necklace around the neck, Harappa.

Pl. 11. (a) Terracotta figurine of Mother Goddess with thick ornament worn round the neck; Harappa.

(b) Terracotta figure of the Mother Goddess with fan-shaped head-dress; Harappa.

Pl. 12. Terracotta figurine of the Mother Goddess with fan shaped head-dress, Harappa.

Pl. 13. Terracotta figurines of the Mother Goddess with pot bellies; Chanhu-daro.

Pl. 14. Terracotta figurines of Mother Goddess, with owl-shaped head, Chanhu-daro.

Pl. 15. Terracotta headless Mother Goddess figurine mounted over bull, Inamgaon.

Pl. 16. Terracotta Mother Goddess figurine, Newasa (Maharashtra), 1200 B.C.

Pl. 17. Terracotta Mother Goddess figurines from Diamabad.

Pl. 18. Terracotta female figurines from Diamabad.

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Pl. 19. Terracotta Mother Goddess figurines from Lothal.

Pl. 20. Seal showing tree goddess with seven ministrants, Mohenjodaro.

Pl. 21. Terracotta seal depicting to the right on the reverse a nude female figure placed upside down with plant issuing from her womb, and legs drawn apart, Mohenjodaro.

Pl. 22. Ivory objects showing eye motifs, Mohenjodaro.

Pl. 23. Gold plaque showing standing Mother Goddess, Lauriya Nandangarh, 600 B.C.

Pl. 24. Terracotta Mother Goddess, Figurines, Ahicchatra.

Pl. 25. Terracotta Mother Goddess figurines, Ahicchatra.

Pl. 26. Disc stone or ring stone, showing three figures of Mother Goddess with snakehood head-gear and flanked by running stag and birds below, besides the palm tree, Murtaziganj, Patna.

Pl. 27. Bust of Mother Goddess figurine, terracotta, Oriup, Bihar.

Pl. 28. Applique figure of a Mother Goddess over a storage jar Phase IV, Navadatoli.

Pl. 29. Violon shaped Mother goddess, Hulas.

Pl. 30. Śiva-Paśupati, seated in Yogie posture surrounded by wild animals, Mohenjodaro.

Pl. 31. Śiva Paśupati, seated in Yogāsana, Mohenjodaro.

Pl. 32. Śivaliṅgas, Kulli culture, Baluchistan.

Pl. 33. Śivaliṅgas, Mohenjodaro.

Pl. 34. Pottery painting showing the story of the travel of the soul towards the abode of Yama, Harappa.

Pl. 35. Tree with unicorn motif, Mohenjodaro.

Pl. 36. Three headed animal, Mohenjodaro.

Pl. 37. Composite deity having half woman and half lion's body.

Pl. 38. (a)-(c) Composite animal figures, Mohenjodaro.

Pl. 39. Composite animal figure, Mohenjodaro.

Pl. 40. Composite animal figure with bull's head and horns, Mohenjodaro.

Pl. 41. Composite human figure with tail and horns, Mohenjodaro.

Pl. 42 (a) Tree and serpent motif, Mohenjodaro.

(b)-(d) Bull standing, with horns, Mohenjodaro.

Pl. 43. Unicorn, Mohenjodaro.

Pl. 44. Monkey carrying a babe, Mohenjodaro.

Pl. 45. Brahmani Bull, Mohenjodaro.

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Pl. 46. Brahmani Bull, Mohenjodaro.

Pl. 47. Humpless Bull, Mohenjodaro.

Pl. 48. Humped Bull, Mohenjodaro.

Pl. 49. Seal from Mohenjodaro showing two human figures carrying uprooted trees, which has been interpreted to represent the legend of Yamalārjuna, Mohenjodaro.

Pl. 50. Amulet showing some religious scene with rhinoceros, an elephant, and urus bull, Mohenjodaro.

Pl. 51. Male figure fighting the tigers on either side, Mohenjodaro.

Pl. 52. Solar symbol on pottery, Chanhudaro.

Pl. 53. Solar symbol on pottery, Chanhudaro.

Pl. 54. Solar symbol on pottery, Chanhudaro.

Pl. 55. Solar symbol on pottery, Chanhudaro.

Pl. 56. Solar symbol on pottery, Chanhudaro.

Pl. 57. Solar symbol on pottery, Chanhudaro.

Pl. 58. Solar symbol on pottery, Chanhudaro.

Pl. 59. Svāstika symbol, Mohenjodaro.

Pl. 60. (a) & (b) Svāstika symbol, Mohenjodaro.

Pl. 61. Svāstika symbol with the head of a unicorn, Mohenjodaro.

Figures

Fig. 1. Female figurines showing developed breasts and pregnancy from the prehistoric rock shelters at Bhim-Betaka, Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh.

Fig. 2. Steatite Venus, Grimldi Caves, Balzi Rossi, upper Palaeolithic.

Fig. 3. Venus from Dolni Vestonice (Moravia), upper Palaeolithic.

Fig. 4. Nude female standing with horn of a buffalo held in raised right hand, Laussel, Dordogne (France), Palaeolithic.

Fig. 5. Stylized alabastar Mother Goddess figure with copper rings fixed in the holes over the head, Hissar-III, Iran, 3100 B.C.

Fig. 6. Owl shaped Mother Goddess, Apollo Museum, Baghdad, 3500 B.C.

Fig. 7. Fragmentary terracotta female figurines, Namazga-I.

Fig. 8. Terracotta female figurines, Namazga-II, Karadipi.

Fig. 9. Terracotta female figurines, Namazga-IV-I, Bronze Age.

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Fig. 10. Terracotta fragment of a female figure, Mehrgarh, Baluchistan.

Fig. 11. Torso of a female figurine, Mundigak, Baluchistan.

Fig. 12. Terracotta figurines of Mother carrying a child, Mehrgarh, Baluchistan, 3500 B.C.

Fig. 13. Terracotta figurines of Mother Goddess, with eyes like sockets, Zhob valley, Baluchistan, 3000 B.C.

Fig. 14. Foot profile—a terracotta female figurines, Gumla, Baluchistan.

Fig. 15. Foot profile of Mother Goddess, Mehergarh, Baluchistan.

Fig. 15. (a) Clay figurines of Mother goddess, Kulli, Baluchistan, 3000 B.C.

Fig. 16. Bust of a female figure, Damb Sadat, Baluchistan.

Fig. 17. Terracotta figure of Mother Goddess caressing an infant, Harappa.

Fig. 18. Terracotta Mother Goddess, with fan shaped head-dress, Harappa.

Fig. 19. Terracotta Mother goddess with pot belly, Chanhu-daro.

Fig. 20. Bust of a terracotta Mother Goddess, Taxila.

Fig. 21. Bust of a terracotta Mother Goddess, Taxila.

Fig. 22. Stylized figure of Mother Goddess in Ivory, Taxila.

Fig. 23. Terracotta figure of Mother Goddess, Lothal.

Fig. 24. Seal showing the Tree Goddess with seven ministerants, Mohanjodaro.

Fig. 25. Aditi or Lajja Gauri, Mahakuta.

Fig. 26. Beautifully attired and richly ornamented Mother Goddess, Patna, Mauryan period.

Fig. 27. Standing female figurine showing typical head-dress and costumes, Buxur, Mauryan period.

Fig. 28. Female terracotta figurine adorned with beautiful head-dress and ornaments. One leg is missing, Buxur, Mauryan period.

Fig. 29. Terracotta female figurine, showing typical head-dress and ornament, Mathura, Early Kuṣana.

Fig. 30. Terracotta female figurine with parrot like head, Mathura, Early Kuṣana.

Fig. 31. Terracotta female figurine with pelvic triangle prominently shown, Mathura, Kuṣana period.

Fig. 32. Terracotta female figurine showing beautiful head gear, Mathura, Kuṣana period.

Fig. 33. Terracotta female figurine showing a turban like head-dress, Sonkh, Mathura, Kuṣana.

Fig. 34. Terracotta female figurine, with elaborate head-gear and costumes, Mathura, Kuṣana.

Fig. 35. Bust of a terracotta figurine, with beaded headgear, Sonkh, late Kuṣana.

Fig. 36. Mother goddess figurine, bronze, Ropar.

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Fig. 37. Terracotta female figurine with elaborate head-dress and costumes, Kosambhi, Mauryan period.

Fig. 38. Terracotta female figurine with elaborate head-dress and costumes, Kosambhi, Mauryan period.

Fig. 39. Fragmentary terracotta female figurines, Kosambhi, Mauryan period.

Fig. 40. Bust of terracotta female figurine, Rajghat, Mauryan Period.

Fig. 41. Fragmentary terracotta figurine, Rajghat, Mauryan period.

Fig. 42. Fragmentary terracotta figurine, Rajghat, Mauryan period.

Fig. 43. Terracotta female figurine, Anguccha, Rajasthan, Kuṣana period.

Fig. 44. Terracotta female figurine, Anguccha, Rajasthan, Kuṣana period.

Fig. 45. Terracotta female figurine, Vaisali, Mauryan period.

Fig. 46. Terracotta female figurine, Vaisali, Mauryan period.

Fig. 47. Seal showing Śiva, Paśupati, seated in Yoga posture, Mohenjodaro.

Fig. 48. Pottery and seals showing horned head-dress of Śiva:-

(a) Hissar.

(b) Gumla.

(c) Gumla.

(d) Kot Diji.

(e) Burzhom.

(f) Mohenjodaro.

(g) Kalibangan.

Fig. 49. Pottery with Svāstika symbols:-

(1) Grecian vase.

(2) Grecian geometric vase.

(3) Grecian geometric vase.

(4) Grecian vase.

(5) Rhodian vase.

(6) Cerveri Italion.

Fig. 50. Svāstika markings.

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1

Introduction

India is the land of religion, where many deities were adored from the time immemorial in a variety of forms. Some of them, though having their genesis in great antiquity, reached us in some form or the other, in the modern times, but there were certain deities who, though mushroomed at some stage of the religious history of India or the other, but lost their relevance with the passage of time, dominating the minds of the people for particular period only. Still there were some deities who, in the past, vanished from the Indian religious scene as rapidly as they had mushroomed. There is another class of deities which came into existence with the emerging of new cults, creeds and religions over the religious horizon of India. These dieties though were adored by the people with immense devotion attracting many followers at some stage, but disappeared from the minds of the people as rapidly as they had emerged. Therefore, there had been constant changes not only in class of deities, but in the methods of their adoration as well. In order however, to have a glimpse of the various deities which had been in adoration in the early stages of Indian religious horizon, one shall have to peep into the past through the windows of explored and excavated sites, the ancient Vedic and post-Vedic literature, the Buddhist and Jain Texts as well as other records like the epigraphical ones, the antiquarian remains, the archaeological discoveries in India as well as the neighbouring countries. Since the evidence of the presence of Indian gods and goddesses and other religious beliefs and practices is found right from stone Age or Pre-historic to the modern times, the discussion of the same will have to run into a number of volumes. But in the present volume, it is proposed to concentrate on the archaeological evidence which highlights the presence of the cult deities or cult objects from earliest times viz., Pre-Harappan, Harappan as well post-Harappan sites. Since the adoration of some of the Pre-Harappan and Harappan deities, travelled upto the historical period as well, therefore in order to exhibit the continuity in the adoration of these deities right upto the historical period, (as evidenced from the excavated material, from some of the selected historical sites) an overlapping has been unavoidable; though it is intended mainly to concentrate on the presence of the deities in pre-Harappan, Harappan or Contemporary sites alone.

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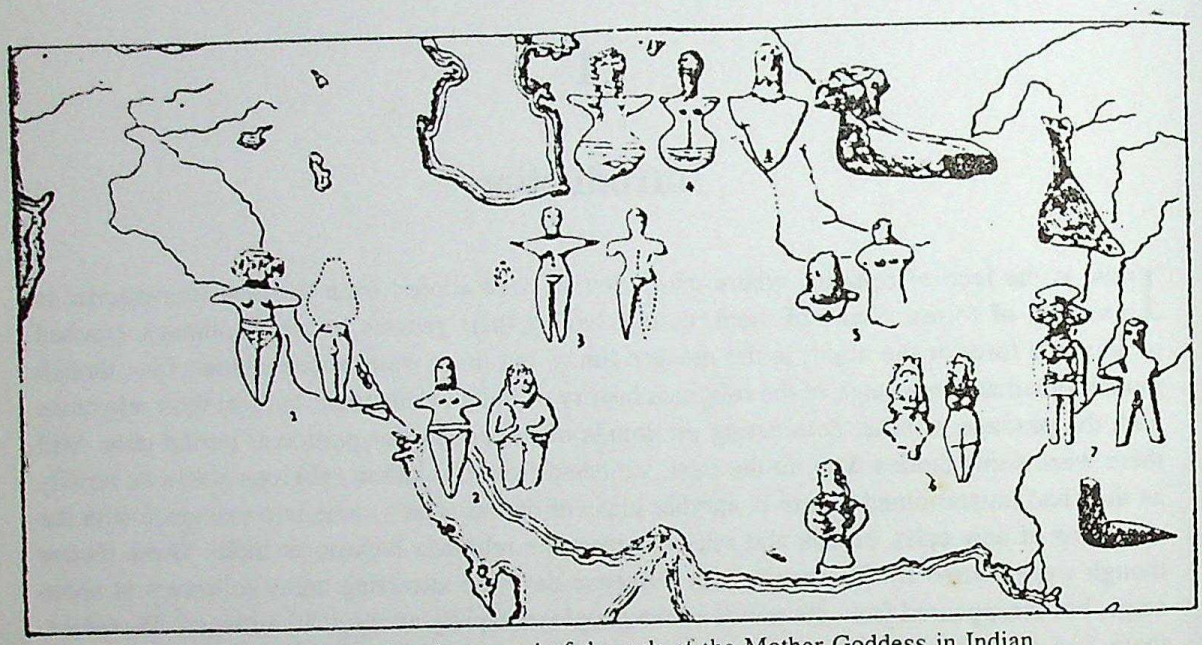
The prominent Chalcolithic pre-Harappan and Harappan sites in the sub-continents are detailed as under, though all of them did not produce all the types of evidence concerning the adoration of all the deities:-



Map 1: Map showing the spread of the cult of the Mother Goddess in Indian Sub-continent and west Asian countries

(a) **Pre-Harappan Sites**

(i) Afghanistan	:	Daslaji Dipi, Ak Kupruk
(ii) Baluchistan	:	Damb Sadat, Kulli, Mehrgarh, Mundigak, Periano Gundai, Dabar Kot, Kile Gul Mohammad, Zhob, Rana Ghundai, Amri, Mehi, Nal, Mughal Ghundai and Gumla.

(b) **Harappan Sites**

(iii) Pakistan	:	Harappa, Mohenjodaro, Chanhudaro, Rahman Deri, Kot Diji, Allahdino
(iv) India	:	Manda, Nagar, Kalpakam, Ropar, Dhadhiri, Bhagwanpura, Alamgirpur, Banavali, Surkotada, Kalibangan, Lothal, Rajdi, Mehgam, Bhagtrav, Somnath and Dhaulavira.

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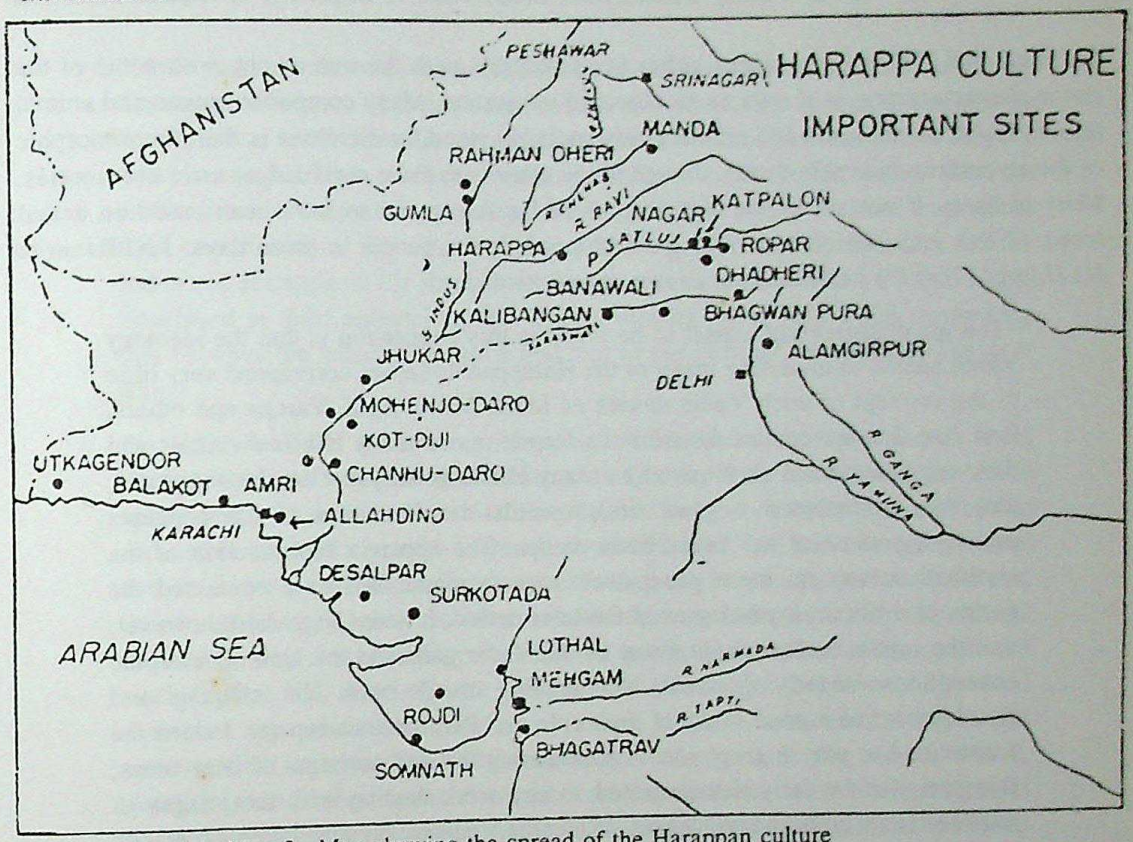

Map 2: Map showing the spread of the Harappan culture

The archaeological evidence available from selected sites has been discussed in this work in order to project the types of deities which were under adoration during those early times. Indeed the Indus valley has acquainted us to some extent with the nature of the religious beliefs and practices of Harappan people in India in that region. Several conclusions have been drawn about the iconographic presentation of some of the devices appearing on the seals, sealings and amulets. The nature of these conclusions, however, is still a tentative one, to a certain extent. Marshall however, makes an interesting remark about the representation of the Indus valley divinities of the remote past. "The people of Mohenjodaro had not only reached the stage of anthropomorphising their deities, but were worshipping them in the aniconic form as well; for the highly conventionalized type of the images of what he justifiably describes as the prototype of Śiva-Paśuapti, its stylized details and the fact that the kindred image portrayed on the faience sealing is being worshipped by Nāgas, clearly point out to its being a copy of the cult idol". The decoration, the sitting posture, the mode of showing the hands, the horns on the head etc., appear also in other figures; some of which may depict different aspects of

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the same god. The nude goddess either in association with the tree or not, with some of the above characteristics, is shown as an object of veneration. Many composite human and animal figures found on the seals and amulets very probably stand for divinities in their theriomorphic or therio-anthropomorphic forms, though many others are to be regarded as mere accessories. Most of them, if not all, of the above types of figures appear to have been based on actual icons of cult gods which were being worshipped by the people in those days. J.N. Banerjea (*D.H.I.*pp. 176-177) has observed in this regard as under:–

> "The most interesting aspect to be noted in this connection is that the ideology which seems to underline many of the Harappan divinities correspond very little to the concept of such Vedic deities as Indra, Mitra, Agni, Varuṇa and others. It is true that we cannot describe the former, as so many Hindu divinities and their representations as those of so many Hindu gods, yet it can be suggested, that they contributed a great deal towards the formation of the concepts underlying some of the later Hindu deities. The apparent reproduction of the mythical scenes on these pre-historic objects might also have contained the germs of different mythologies of the later period. It is not suggested, however, that the myths current about many of the Vedic gods and the anthropomorphic conceptions underlying them had nothing to do with the shaping and development of a good many of their epic and Puranic counterparts. Indeed the former had to play a great part in formulating the god concepts of later times; this can also be fully demonstrated in any work dealing with the images of various Hindu gods and goddesses. In fact the Vedic traits of the latter, especially in case of the cult of divinities were really superimposed on their primitive pre-Vedic care. As the Vedic period was far nearer to the epic and Puranic times and as copious literary data of the former age are available to us, we can trace out anologies and influences with more certainty. Further researches and excavations in various ancient sites of India, will supply us with more clues and links of the intervening period that are now missing which will enable us to connect the Indus valley evidence with the epic and Puranic data with greater authenticity. Even the change in the Vedic beliefs and practices of a date later than that of early Ṛgvedic hymns were brought about by the rites and customs of these pre-Historic people in India."

Tracing the presence of religion in Chalcolithic India, E.O. James, keeping in view the cultures of Kulli and Zhob valleys, besides Harappa and Mohenjodaro, has observed. (*The Ancient Gods,* pp. 24-25).

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> "In the present state of the data available, it is not possible to determine precisely the course of events in Baluchistan before 3000 B.C., but it would seem to be among these small farming communities that the sources of Indian civilization must be sought. Thus, while Baluchistan villages would appear behind them the earlier Iranian settlements, such as Sialk and Giyan, they in their turn made their contribution to the urban culture of Mohenjodaro and Chanhu-daro on the Indus and Harappa on the Ravi, the three great ruined cities of the Punjab which flourished in third millennium BC. These villages were, infact, the connecting link between the Indus civilization and that of the Fertile Crescent and Western Iran."

> "In their secluded mountain valleys in Baluchistan, they developed local characteristic reflected in their pottery at Quetta, Nal, Kolwa and the Zhob valley and at Amaru in Sind. If these centres can be described as centres of distinctive cultures since the techniques of the wares that had been discovered in them do not conform strictly to a specified type as in Mesopotamia at Hassuna, Halaf and El-ubaid, they reveal a considerable measure of uniformity. Black and red pottery, for instance predominated in the Zhob valley in the north and black buff at Nal, Amri, Quetta and Kulli in the south. Therefore they would seem to represent the remains of large settled, self-contained peasant communities in which agriculture, pottery making, with the aid of wheel, metallurgy and other crafts flourished and opened the way for commercial intercourse with cities that were rising in the North-West India. This is indicated by the traces of the exchange of goods between the villages of Baluchistan and Sind and the towns of the Indus Valley and Harappan civilization."

Though the prevalance of the worship of the Mother Goddess is testified with the discovery of the terracotta figurines in the Kulli and Zhob Valleys in Baluchistan and the adjacent areas, but according to the same scholar, the sites of Harappa and Mohenjodaro stand for authentic testimony of cult practices and adoration of water god as well. (*Ibid,* p. 27):–

> " . . . the most imposing structures of all excavations at Mohenjodaro, described by Sir John Marshall as a vast hydropathic establishment, consisting of a large swimming bath in an open quadrangle built of burnt brick reached by a stair case. To the north are the remains of small bath rooms with paved floors and a stair way leading presumably to an upper storey, containing, it is thought, the cells of the priests engaged in water cult of which the great bath was the central centuary. Here it would seem is the proto-type of the ritual bathing which

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became such a prominent feature in the sacred streams in the Vedic India and in modern Hinduism . . .

". . .The great bath is the most imposing structure in the city and there is a large straggling edifice which may have been the governor's residence and administrative centre. Some of the other more pretentious erections may have been the shrines of the Great Mother, though they cannot be detected with any degree of certainty in the ruins today, not withstanding the evidence of the cult in the terracotta figurines and carved seals."

The most interesting features of Harappan civilization is also the presence of the fire-altars, which have been discovered from Harappa and other Harappan sites. While it would be difficult to spell out precisely the ritualistic practices connected with the use of the fire-altars, but their use for religious purposes cannot, however, be totally denied.

But during the time of Harappan people the cults and their ideologies must have been transformed and interpreted mystically, metaphysically and symbolically, since its original character and significance are quite apparent. The phallic element unquestionably goes back to the pre-historic substratum of the Goddess cult, and as Sir John Marshall has pointed out (*Mohenjodaro and the Indus Civilization*, Vol.I, p.VII) that the religion of the Indus people is so characteristically Indian as handy to be distinguished from still living Hinduism, or at least from that aspect of it, which is bound up with animism and the cults of Śiva and the Mother Goddess–still the two most potent forces in popular worship. Among the many revelations that Mohenjodaro and Harappa had in store for us, none perhaps is more remarkable than the discovery that Śaivism has a history going back to the Chalcolithic Age or perhaps even further still and that it thus takes its place as the most ancient living faith in the world. From this source it was introduced into Vedic worship as an intrusive element, but because it answered to certain fundamental human needs it found a ready response and acquired deeper and more philosophical traits which were given expression in the syncretistic figures of Śiva and his consort without destroying their original personalities as vegetation deities. The Great God was quite popular with the lndus people, yet he was primarily concerned with the renewal of the nature, the death and the decay of vegetation, being but the prelude to its revival in the spring. As the symbol of life, he was identified with the processes of reproduction in all their forms and aspects as creative energy in the cycles of birth and death and rebirth.

Thus Umā (light), the spouse of Śiva was a syncretistic goddess of nature and fertility in the beginning, as foreign to the Vedic tradition as her husband. In the course of development, she evolved into his female counterpart becoming the feminine side of his character. In her northern cradleland, she was a mountain goddess, Pārvatī and there she acquired the wild and furious attributes of a similar mountain goddess, Vindhyavāsinī, who also became the spouse

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of Śiva, just as Umā was identified with the wife of Rudra and as Kālī or Mahākālī (the black), she was once helpful, sinister and terrible. In course of time, a number of goddesses beneficent and malevolent were combined into one Greater Goddess, the spouse of Śiva, personifying his Śakti often bearing the name of Devī or Durgā one of the common epithets of Umā, especially in her terrific character, at the end of the Vedic period. Thus Indus people provide us a clear evidence of Śiva and Śakti having been popular with them in some form or the other, though it would be difficult to say the names by which they were called.

Besides Śiva in the form of Yogīśvara and Umā as Mother Goddess as stated above, both of them were worshipped in the aniconic forms of *liṅga* and *yoni*, which practice is still in vogue in the present day Hinduism and the country has an innumerable number of Śiva temples enshrining the Śivaliṅgas. Though the *liṅgas* in subsequent period were treated to represent Śiva, in his symbolical form, but it would be difficult to connect them together as early as the Chalcolithic times in so far as the evidence of the Chalcolithic sites is concerned. But it is evident that Śiva in human form as Yogīśvara besides the symbolic form of *liṅga* was in adoration of the people simultaneously in the Harappan times. The bull, in the epics and the Purāṇas is also associated with Śiva. The exact period during which the bull was associated with Śiva would be difficult to state, but the early Sanskrit literature associates the animal with the god from quite an early date. Though the bull is found present in several forms in the antiquities of Harappa, Mohenjodaro and other Harappan or Pre-Harappan sites, but it would be difficult to say, whether the animal was at all associated with Śiva. Similarly though lion has also been found present in the Harappan seals, but its association with a particular deity would be difficult to testify.

The Harappan evidence further points to the adoration of many other divinities, animals, birds, reptiles and snakes besides the natural phenomena, as would be evident from the following tabulation:-

(i) *Aquatic animals:-* Crocodiles

(ii) *Reptiles:-* Snakes (Nāgas).

(iii) *Natural forces*:- The sun, water, fire altars

(iv) *Animals (wild & domestic)*:-Monkey, buffalo, goat and lion.

(v) *Composite forms* :- a) Two headed animals

b) Human and animals

c) Unicorn

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(vi) *Tree worship*:-Various trees adored in several forms; Yamalārjuna, Tree spirit.

(vii) *Vedic and Puranic gods*:-Yama

(viii) *Birds*:- Peacock, dove.

Besides the above, scholars have tried to trace the evidence of the human as well as animal sacrifice from the antiquarian remains of Harappan sites. A seal from Mohenjodaro displays a nude female placed upside down with a plant issuing from her womb. This figure is at the right extremity of the obverse face. At the left end of the same face and separated from it by an inscription of six letters are a pair of "genii." On the reverse side, the same inscription is repeated, and to the left of it, are the figures of a man and a woman. The former is standing with a sickle-shaped knife in his right hand, the latter is seated on the ground with hands raised in an attitude of supplication. This scene has been interpreted to represent the human sacrifice connected with the Earth Goddess. As far the animal sacrifice, scenes of the goat standing before an altar in the seals and sealing have been interpreted as portraying the animal sacrifice.

The places of worship have also to be found when so numerous are the objects of veneration. Elsewhere in this work the presence of a community bath at Mohenjodaro has been discussed, which stands testimony to the fact that purity of the body before the attempt to adoration was considered essential by the Harappan people; which practice continues in the present day Hinduism. But very little has been found as to the actual places of worship. In this connection a seal from Mohenjodaro comes to our rescue. There is a seal from Mohenjodaro (No. DIC 11583) which provides the elevation of a place of worship at the site. On one side of it is a man seated in a tree with a cat like animal looking back over its shoulders, at him. (This scene occurs in other seals as well). On the opposite, a row of animals, can be identified as rhinoceros, an elephant and a Urus bull. Above them on the left is a *ghariāl*, or a fish eating crocodile, with a fish in its jaws and on the right, there appears to be a bird. A third and narrower side is far the more interesting, and though it is very badly mutilated, still certain details are quite clear. On the left is a tree beneath which is a small truncated pyramid-like object, perhaps a shrine, surmounted by a standard, the details of which are very difficult to make out. A goat like animal with long horns and short upturned tail stands on each side of the pyramid with its four legs resting on its top. Hanging from the branches of the tree are a number of objects, that may represent either leaves or fruits, though the seemingly sacred character of the shrine like structure beneath the tree is suggestive of offering. (It is quite common in India to find clothings, rags, etc., hung in a tree as offerings to the spirit, which is supposed to dwell therein. This custom is not confined to India. The Pipal tree is especially revered by ladies). In the middle of this side a kneeling man holds in

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both hands, what may be a small sapling that he is about to plant, while the woman standing before him bends down holding a basket in her hands. Behind the woman is a badly mutilated figure of a tiger. Further to the right are some invisible details, one of which could be a dancing figure. If this be so, the middle and the right hand of this scene may depict some religious rite. Thus this device provides an idea not only of the place of religious practices or shrine, but also the actual adoration of the deity, the identity of whom is not quite clear. Besides this, the adoration of trees has been found in several other cases. As for example, in a tablet from Mohenjodaro, a man is seen perched in a tree with a tiger apparently walking away but at the same time taking a last look at his hope for prey in tantalising security, though this would certainly not have been the case had the beast been as large in proportion to the tree as it is represented. Earlier it was thought to be a humorous scene, but taken in connection with the obviously religious subject to the right of it, it seems more probable that it is allegorical. On certain sealings from Harappa various trees are represented which the artists have been at pains to differentiate one from the other, but the workmanship is too minute for the several species to be identified with confidence. A point of some interest, however, is that two atleast of the trees on these sealings spring from what appears to be either an enclosing wall or railing such as commonly encircles the roots of the sacred trees on the later reliefs of historical period, and were regarded as almost indispensable symbols of their sanctity.

A conspicuous feature of the antiquarian remains of Harappan sites has been the projection on, seals, of the contemporary legends. As for example, a religious scene which has been quite popular in the later Hindu mythology is the depiction on a seal No. 279 from Mohenjodaro, of a man with his foot upon the animal's nose, grasping a horn with one hand and with the other about to thrust a spear with a barbed point into the animal's bark. This scene has been variously interpreted. But Mackay's interpretation of its being the depiction of Śiva's combat with Dundubhī seems to be based more on factual justifications because the trident used in this case is the attribute of Śiva and the deity attacking the buffalo is the male deity and not the female one. The antiquarian remains have indeed highlighted in two specimens which have been interpreted to represent scenes which find a mention in the later Puranic literature. The first one is as stated above, the scene, which has been represented as Śiva's combat with Dundubhī, the demon, and the other one is the scene in which two human figures have been shown carrying the uprooted trees, by each one of them. This has been interpreted by scholars differently, but some of them believe it to be the depiction of the episode of Yamalārjuna, as contained in the Purāṇas and other texts. In case these interpretations could be taken to be correct, it would mean that the roots of not only of the deities, but also of the legends in the literature and practices of present day Hinduism, were available in the Indus civilisation. This belief is further strengthened in case we keep in view the presence of Śiva, *liṅgas* and *yonis*, the adoration of which has come down to the present times in one or the other form. Another

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important aspect of the Harappan civilization in the field of religious practices has been the presence of amulets which were worn by the people possibly to ward off evil or for getting their desires fulfilled. It may be recalled here that the Vedic literature often prescribes charms and ritualistic practices for removal of diseases, achieving of the good harvest, defeat of the enemy and several other causes for the fulfilment of the human desires. Several amulets have been recovered from the sites of Harappa and Mohenjodaro. Some of them are made of baked clay. In some cases in order to obtain satisfactory illustrations, casts were taken of the three sides and on all sides different scenes were depicted. There is every reason to believe that they were used as amulets or charms because they could hardly have been used for any other purpose, for scenes with pictographs were stamped or moulded on the back or in the front, with a few exceptions.

Compared with the number of seals and sealings, these amuletic sealings are noticeably rare, possibly for the reason, that they would seem to have been carried in a case or a pouch on the person and were therefore, less likely to be lost. These amulets were made of either fiaence or pottery, both of which substances lend themselves readily to moulding. These amulets depict various religious scenes.

In many ancient religions of the universe, the composite animals were found too frequently, which had the religious importance of their own. In India too, we have several references of the composite forms, the most prominent amongst them being Gaṇeśa, who is still adored in the modern India in the entire length and breadth of the country. Such instances are many. In the Harappan culture this aspect has not been lost sight of. Here we have mainly two types of composite forms viz., composite figurines of animals and humans, and composite animals' figurines. As for example, a seal from Harappa depicts a composite monster, whose fore parts, consisting of body, fore legs, head and horns are bovine, while the face is human, the tusk and trunk are those of an elephant and the hind part comprising of haunches, legs and tail are of a lion. The other two are the terracotta sealings which are also of a mythological character. One of them on the obverse shows a deity wearing a kilt or short tunic and a three pointed head-dress standing under an ornamental arch, which appears to have been made of the bent bow of a *pipal* tree. The lower ends of this bow are rounded up to form loops, each enclosing a star. The head of the deity is turned a little towards the right and on both arms he wears a number of amulets. The religious value of these composite forms has been testified by Sir John Marshall (*M.I.C.* pp. 66-67):–

> "Such (composite) images can hardly have been other than the cult objects intended for worship; on the other hand, the seals, like most of the seals found at Mohenjodaro and Harappa were almost certainly amulets, which we may surmise, were used by votaries of this curious syncretic form of deity".

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Interestingly, some of the conceptions of the present day Hinduism about the travel of the dead after their death as prescribed in the Brahmanical texts have been interpreted as depicted over the Harappan pottery. While in one case Yama with his dogs is found depicted; in another scene, the travel of the soul through the Vaitarṇī river has been quite lively projected. A pot from Harappa is found painted with horizontal rows of wavy lines alternating with highly conventionalised trees, separated from one another by stars; with similar rows of wavy lines and trees between which are rows of flying birds; in one case there is only one wavy line and in another case a flying peacock alternates with fantastic animals. Then there are peacocks with trident tails and wavy lines ending in stars or rayed orbs and rows of leaves linked together. The scene on one of the pots is quite elaborate. The animals are male. Seemingly bulls with bird like heads and a curious device appear around the neck. In the case of the second bull from the left, could be a bird headed spirit of the dead, who is carried apparently on the animal's back, whereas on the third figure it becomes part and parcel of the animal's head, which is longer than that of the other cattle on the jar. On the other hand, in another instance the spirit of the dead is carried (in a therianthropic form) in the body of the flying peacock.

The evidence of the Harappan culture has portrayed several divine animals including the goat. But in one case the animal has been depicted with a trident appearing between the two horns, which undoubtedly is the mark of sanctity. The association of a trident with the goat is quite well known when the head of the goat was severed by Śiva with a trident for fixing over the body of Dakṣa Prajāpati, but the specimen does not seem to be connected with the said episode.

Thus, the Chalcolithic sites display Śiva, Śakti, Mother Goddess and several other deities besides following of the contemporary religious practices, customs and rites in a variety of forms.

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2

Female Deities

I. THE MOTHER GODDESS

The mother aspect in the universe is as ancient as the human race on earth, and in due course of time it came to be regarded as sacred. This mother aspect, when viewed in the light of human nature can be traced out from the Stone Age. It is not known as to when the physical superiority of man and the so called inferiority of woman began to be recognised. It is likely to have been felt with the emerging of the hunting and doing other jobs in the contemporary society in which physical strength was the *sine qua non.* In the case of woman, however, pregnancy has been the most emotional stage and the birth of a child, a jubilant moment. In the early stages of human history this phenomenon must have made an awe-inspiring impact on the mind of man. For, in this, he must have understood the "Fertility" aspect of woman and that it was exclusive of her, to give birth to a child, although he had his role to play in it. He must have also realised that although nursing and imparting training to the child in the necessary fields depended upon the prevailing situation and involved besides the "mother" other individuals as well, the shape of motherhood was exclusively for the woman. Thus the birth of a child must not have been a simple event. It added a new member in the family–an increase in the number of the existing family members. It seems therefore more likely that this "production" ability of woman should have been the cause for the rise and growth of feelings of admiration and reverence for her in the heart of the Early Man. Though the evidence of the presence of the adoration of the Mother Goddess in Stone Age Culture in India is quite scanty except for a few figurines from the Prehistoric rock paintings like those at Bhimbetika (near Bhopal) in Madhya Pradesh, where pregnant ladies are frequently shown; as well as a bone object from Belan valley; but in other countries of Europe, such specimens belonging to the Upper-Palaeolithic period are available. In India, however, we are far behind them and we have to confine our study on the subject to the archaeological finds from the Chalcolithic Pre-Harappan, Harappan and Post-Harappan sites alone, which do not take us as far as the figures from Europe and other countries. The term Mother Goddess, equivalent to Indian *mātā* (*māṭr, mātrikā*) or māṭṛ-devī, is widely applicable to a variety of female figures, symbolising creativity, birth and fertility. The emphasis in the depiction is on maternal aspects with variable

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features, such as prominent breasts and navel, steatophygic display of *yoni*, a well marked girdle and occasionally an infant on the left side. Unlike Europe, Indian Palaeolithic sites have not yielded any definite goddess figurines. The suggestion that the Upper Palaeolithic bone harppoon from the Belan valley represents a female figurine, seems to be far fetched according to A. Ghosh. It is in the period of settled agriculture of the Chalcolithic culture of pre-Harappan Zhob, Quetta, Kulli and the Harappan Indus Valley that the earliest female figurines of the sub-continent are found. It is not clear why the Harapan sites of Kalibangan, Surkotada etc., have not yielded the Indus types of female figurines, (Fig. 1).

Before starting an in-depth study of the presence of the Mother Goddess in the Indus valley Civilization or Harappan culture, it would be of considerable interest to peep into the cultures of the countries adjacent to the Harappan sites which are anterior to those in the continent. In this connection it may be pointed out that the evolution of the cult of Mother Goddess in Indian sub-continent could be related with the development of the terracotta art in India as well as in the neighbouring countries; which was practised by the earliest food-producing cave man in Afghanistan, Baluchistan and the entire north-west region, right from the fourth millennium B.C. Indeed figurines similar to those of the Indus Valley have been discovered from many countries in Western Asia between Persia and Aegcan. These could possibly be the forerunners of the Indus civilization which flourished in the early centuries of third millennium B.C. These village communities on the frontiers of India, no doubt continued to survive and co-exist with the Harappans. They had achieved proficiency in the technique of fashioning human as well as the animal figurines, all made in hand by about the beginning of the third millennium B.C. Though the communities in the north-west of India, were almost contemporary but remained isolated from one another, having no influence on one another in so far as their artistic skill and creative genius are concerned. The terracotta figurines in these regions, though are not found in abundance, in some of the sites in the region, but are extremely interesting forming a class of their own. In the third millennium B.C. a definite stage was reached in the development of the figurines of the Mother Goddess in the art of terracotta. The Harappans as the people of Indus civilization, produced the Mother Goddess figurines on an enormous scale. Inspite of the suggestion of Mackay[1] that some of the Harappan terracotas had been the work of children, (and indeed some of them are like that), and though some scholars feel that cradle land of the cult was beyond Indian frontiers, but John Marshall[2] testifies emphatically that the worship of mother goddess was widespread in the Indus empire and further observes that "in no country in the world has the worship of the Divine Mother, been from the time immemorial so deep rooted and ubiquitous as in India" (Figs. 2-6).

Indeed two distinctly divergent, but equally forceful schools of thought tracing the cradle land of the cult of the Mother Goddess are available. The first group mainly from the west is represented by E.O. James, according to which the part of the globe encompassing Western

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Asia, the Southern Russian plains and the valley of the river Don was the homeland of the cult of the Mother Goddess,[3] which was initially introduced in central Europe by a group of people migrating from Asia; they ultimately migrated into Europe through Moravia and spread over that continent. The views of James were based on the available archaeological evidence in the form of female figurines commonly called Venuses made in bone, ivory, stone and bas-relief, often found with grossly exaggerated organs of maternity. The pioneers of other school including Sir John Marshall, considered north-west Asia and Harappan part of the Indian sub-continent, housing the sites of Baluchistan, Mehrgarh, Harappa and Mohenjodaro as the area for the birth of the cult of the Mother Goddess.[4]

The study of the evidence of the cult of the Mother Goddess, would reveal that she was adored in a variety of forms. This could be due to the reason that the mother has a variety of functions to perform, as a mother. She has initially to conceive and bear the child. (The pregnancy of a female is found depicted in the pre-historic rock shelters at Bhimbetika near Bhopal besides in the later specimens). After the child is born the mother has to assume the role of fondling him (The teracotta figurines from Mehrgarh and Harappa depict the standing figure of a mother with child) while bringing him up she has not only to feed her properly, but also to punish the child in case of need, or to take to a wild form in order to save the child from external dangers. The mother thus assumes the benevolent as well as malignant foms in case of need. These aspects too are brought out in the archaeological evidence from the excavated sites. However, with the further development of the human mind, the Mother Goddess was also conceived as Śakti or Earth Mother and even as Śākambharī or the mistress of the vegetation or production. All these aspects of the Mother are amply brought out by the evidence available from the archaeological sites (Figs. 12 & 17).

(i) Pre-Historic Evidence

Before taking up the discussion on the evidence of the Mother Goddess available from the excavated sites like Harappa and Mohenjodaro, it would be of interest to have a bird-eye view of the evidence of the presence of cult in the Pre-historic site of the Belan Valley. H.D. Sankalia[5] points out that "a small figurine was found in the Belan Valley of the Mirzapur district of Uttar Pradesh. It is reported to have been found from Diaya on the "Lohanda", whereas in the text, it is said that it was found "from Gravel III". It is not yet clear whether and where the so called upper Palaeolithic faciles (tools) fashioned on chert or cherty flint like blades, pointed scrappers and burins were found along with bone figurine or separately" collected, "as the term used is" from several sites in the Belan Valley. We may accept the implication of this general or rather vague statement that some burins were actually found with the bone figurine, though a specific statement and details of all the finds with regard to this important discovery are indeed necessary and would be most welcome. Meanwhile we

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may regard the entire collection as roughly contemporaneous and belongs to Gravel III....However, the actual inspection of the specimen at Allahabad in 1974, with the courtesy of Professor Sharma, and his colleagues, leaves no doubt that the object is not a harpoon, but a female figurine."

But S.P. Gupta[6] has contested the claim and he does not feel that the figurine is that of a Mother Goddess. His views are projected as under:–

> "The object in question is pure and simple harpoon so commonly found at Upper Palaeolithic sites in the continent. The two largely preserved projections in the centre are barks and not the hands of the goddess. That there was another set of these barks also at the base of the extant top is more clear in sharp cut-marks and the remaining incipient projections. The drooping nature of the barks should not make us close our eye to the obvious....My own experience in handling such objects in Museums of France now make me come out with my opinion, which incidentally most of the pre-historians in the world share....."

In this connection A. Ghosh[7] has observed as follows:-

> " Not much evidence is available to indicate if any artistic objects were made in this country during the Upper Palaeolithic, excepting a fragment of an ostrich eggshell having an engraving in a criss-cross pattern found at PATNE and a bone figurine (a doubtful mother goddess) found in a gravel horizon on the BELAN". (Encyclopaedia of Indian Archaeology, p.35).

Thus the identification of the harpoon like object, discovered from Belan cannot be claimed to be beyond suspicion, of its being that of the Mother Goddess.

(ii) Pre-Harappan Sites

In the above background as well as in the absence of any tangible evidence, it cannot be claimed with authority that the adoration of the Mother Goddess was in vogue in the Upper Palaeolithic, though in the Pre-historic cave paintings in the rock shelters of Bhimbetika a few female figurines with signs of pregnancy have been found depicted, which could represent the mother-hood (Pl. 1).

It would thus be quite appropriate to come down to the Chalcolithic pre-Harappan times, in order to make a search for the cult objects in these sites. At the outset it may be stated that though the pre-Harappan sites are found in plenty beyond the present Indian frontiers which have sufficient evidence of the presence of the cult objects, but in India, such sites are not many and those too do not possess the type of cult objects unearthed from the pre-Harappan and Harappan sites beyond the present Indian boundaries (Figs. 7-9).

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The presence of the Mother Goddess is found in Indian-Sub-continent of the terracotta female figurines discovered from different pre-Harappan, Harappan, post-Harappan or historic sites. Of these the earliest ones have been found in the pre-Harappan sites of Kulli[8] and Zhob culture, besides Harappa and Mohenjodaro and other similar sites. These female figures far outnumber the male ones. This may indicate their use for cult purposes, the female energy or mother principle, being one of the earliest forms of worship among several ancient races of the world. Similar figures were found at Harappa. Dr. Stein reported the discovery of such goddesses[9] from the mound of Periano-Ghundai. Special interest is attached to the small relief figurine made of fine clay and showing a hooded human with a high and exaggerated large nose and female breasts. Closely resembling reliefs were found on the surface of Periano-Ghundai and also at the mounds of Kandani[10] and elsewhere. From the mound of Dabarkot at Loralai, it was reported that "Among the objects found near the bottom of the site" small terracotta figurines are of special interest; for the hooded head and draped bust of woman with exaggerated large breasts, agree in all details with the female figures from Periano-Ghundai, Kandani, and Mughul-Ghundai (Pl 2). It appears as if these little figurines so uniform in features and style might have been intended to represent some tutelary goddess.[11]

A female goddess of bird-like features showing a very premature rendering of the female figure was picked up from Kalatuk-damb in Kalat. The terracotta[12] figurines, which judging from the elaborate head-dress and other ornaments conld be taken as those of the goddess were also gathered from the sites of Shahi-tump, Kolwa, Jhalawan and Zhob sites[13] (Fig. 13). But the mound of Kulli yielded fine figurines of the goddess which were intact except for the tip of the nose, right down to the waist below which it ended like the figurines[14] (Fig 15(a) from the previously named sites. What imparts particular interest to this representation is a sucking babe shown here at the breast of the figure. This strikingly confirms the view that these figurines represent a divinity of fertility or the Mother Goddess[15] of many ancient eastern cults. The treatment of the face almost bird-like with the eyes set side ways is distinctly archaic. The same type was unearthed from the most archaic site of Mehi[16], where almost as frequent as the figurines of humped bull were found besides the figures of the goddess. Of humped bull from Mehi nearly two hundred varying from two to four inches in size were found and of the female nearly 92 specimens were found in various states of preservation. In these figurines, one finds the presence of the same elaborate coiffure with long tresses is sufficient to mark the sex. Throughout we observe the identical and very archaic treatment of face, which is almost bird like, and also, where enough of the figurines is preserved, the same pose of the hands placed against the breast or the waist. It is important to note that here as in the case of all representations of the goddess, found at other sites the figurines, whenever their lower portions survive, invariably end below the waist in the flat vase. This proves that all of them were meant to be set up for adoration purposes. A variety is introduced mainly in the

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treatment of the hair-dress and of the ornaments around breast and the neck. Particularly ornate jewellery is shown (by some figurines). No indications of dress are attempted. These figurines may have been meant to represent a female divinity or fertility; the Mother Goddess, whose worship meets us in widely distant parts of Asia and Europe throughout historical times. The fact that she is found at Kulli site, shown once with the babe in her arms may lend support to this conjecture. Though such a type of nude goddess prevailed most widely in the ancient world from central Europe to the valley of the Gaṅgā is well known to the archaeologists, scholars have expressed the view that she is the Great Mother. It is she, who makes all the nature bring forth. All existing things are emanations from her. She is the madonna carrying the holy child or watching over him. She is the mother of the men and of the animals too. She continuously appears with an exort of beasts, because she is the mistress of wild animals, snakes, birds and riches. She even makes the plants grow by her fecundity, perpetrating the vegetative force of which she is the fountain head. (F-15A)

The Harappan[17] civilization as Wheeler has put it, 'like any other great revolution may best be visualised as a sudden offspring of opportunity and genius' (Wheeler, 1966). The sudden growth of a highly urbanized civilization has remained a challenge to the archaeologists. Ghosh has said, "While Death from unidentified causes is understandable, natural birth is an unnatural phenomenon (Ghosh,1965). No doubt recent archaeological discoveries in the Indo-Pak sub-continent have given some clues to the origin of this culture but the exact genetic relationship is yet to be established.

Pre-Harappan cultures which have been found in the sub-continents are determined on the basis of (i) stratigraphy, (ii) cultural equipment, (iii) pottery and (iv) carbon dates. Baluchistan in the 4th and 3rd millenia B.C. had a large number of village communities living in the border land where the Iranian plateau drops into the Indus plains. The present Baluchi hills had, it seems more rainfall in ancient times. The evidence of *gabarbands* or dams of antiquity might indicate irrigation and a larger population. These small cultures flourished in Quetta and Zhob valleys in Baluchistan. In Baluchistan area there are six zones with important pre-Harrappan sites: (1) Quetta valley-Kile Gol Mohammad, Damb Sadat; (2) Zhob valley:- Periano Ghundai, (3) Lora Lai valley-Rana Gundai, Sur Jangal; (4) Surab valley-Togau, Siah Damb, Anjira; (5) Nal, Nundura, and (6) Kulli, Mehi.

D. H. Gordon[18] has reported the discovery of a few terracotta figurines from the Pre-Harappan sites. These figurines were discovered from the ancient sites in the Zhob. Nothing could be more dissimilar than these terracottas and those of Harappan culture. These figures are made of grey fragile pottery which is so characteristic of the early figures of Sumer. They are aesthetically totally different to those found at the Indus sites, and are the product of a different art tradition and probably of a totally different people and possibly of a totally

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different age. These female figurines have an air of primitive decadence; they are far less robust in every way than those made in Indus cities. They are all broken off at the waist, so it is impossible to say definitely, whether they were nude figures or they wore some sort of skirt or loin cloth. The most common head-dress appears to be formed by two narrow applied bands framing the face; two other types exist, a semi cylindrical hat wider at the top than at the bottom, and a star shaped head-dress with three points. The figures are adorned with a number of necklaces close together down to the shoulders. The outstanding peculiarity is the eye form; they are round hollowed out sockets with a surrounding ridge. It is possible that these had some paste or stone eye inserted in them. This eye form is reminiscent of that employed in the "dead man" figure from Peru.

In this connnection, A. Ghosh[19], has observed as follows:–

"Except for Kalibangan Pd. I, there are no pre-Harappan sites in India, that have been c. dated. There are other sites like Bara, Mitathal, etc., which have some pre-Harappa traits but they obviously continued much later. Kalibangan Pd. I is to be bracketed between c. 2400 and 2000 on the basis of c dates. In the upper limit there is an obvious overlap with Harappa. For the Harappa Culture, several sites in Rajasthan (Kalibangan Pd. II), Gujarat (Lothal, Roidi, Surkotada) and Haryana (Banawali, Mitathal) have also been dated. The time spread of the Indian Harappa culture is c. 2200-1700. In the metropolitan areas of Mohenjodaro and Harappa, it may go back to c. 2400-2000 B.C."

It is indeed in the period of settled agriculture of the Chalcolithic culture of pre-Harappan Zhob, Quetta, Kulli and the Harappa Indus Valley that the earliest female figurines of the sub-continent are found. However, in the Pre-Harappan sites within the present boundaries of India, like Kalibangan, Lothal, Surkotada, have not yielded the Indus types of female figurines.

The Chalcolithic cultural complex at Dashlaji in northern Afghanistan has revealed a large number of artefacts including terracotta female figurines. The site is very small and raising to about two metres in height with only three building levels having mud brick houses. By and large, the feamle figurines are schematic, modelled without arms and breasts, blurred face and long nose, with other features indicated by shallow depression like some of the figurines from Sussenia in south-west Iran.[20]

The earliest settlement in South eastern Afghanistan is represented in the site of Mundigak now a tributary of the Arghandab river. The torso of a female deity uncovered from period III of the site is an attractive piece of the terracotta art. It has a narrow waist, but the breasts are damaged. A female figure from period IV, has an owl shaped face with projecting eyes; wears a necklace, the hands and lower portions of the figure are missing. Another bust of a female figurine from the same period has a decorated head with locks of hair falling on the

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shoulders. The eyes are represented in the form of circular holes. A necklace of many bands, adorns the neck[21] (Fig.11).

After Afghanistan, the evidence in Baluchistan may be discussed. Mehrgarh is the Neolithic site in Baluchistan which came to light in beginning of this Century. The site is located some 150 km. south east of Quetta, within the Bolan pass. The site has revealed terracotta figurines of Namazga type of Mother Goddess. In some cases she is projected as carrying the child in her left hand, while in another specimen from Gumla, she is represented in a foot-profile, which is somewhat complete while the one from Mehrgarh is only fragmentary[22] (Figs. 10, 12-15).

Kupruk is situated in the limestone hills south of the famous town of Mizar-i-Sharif in Afghanistan, which overlooks the river Oxis. The excavations at the site revealed the sequence of Neolithic culture. Phase A of the site has been dated 800 B.C. which produced an extremely significant find—a crude stone sculpture of a pregnant woman. This could be the earliest image of the cult in Afghanistan and is an impressive testimony to archaic nature of the cult in the region. Though this find is of a considerably late period, but it still stands testimony to the fact the adoration of the deity in one form or the other prevailed in the region right upto 800 BC or[23] so.

The pre-Harappan Mother Goddess figurines of Zhob and Kulli cultures have grotesque character. They are the earliest expressions of the religious ideas of the first farmers of the sub-continent. They depict the nature and form of divinities which were conceived by them. However, the distinctive culture within the Buff-ware group which could be identified in the West of the Indian Sub-continent is the one from Southern Baluchistan site in the Kolwa region popularly known as Kulli culture. It is distinguished mainly on the grounds of a very characteristic painted pottery style, and is known from the relatively limited number of sites. The other sites in the region which are credited with the discovery of the cult figurines are Kile Gul Muhammad and Periano Ghundai. A large number of clay figurines were unearthed from the Kulli sites, which are believed to be of Mother Goddess. In common with the Kulli culture of Southern Baluchistan, the Zhob valley has also produced a number of clay figurines of cattle and women and though the stratified deposits of Rana Ghundai contained some of these specimens, their occurrence at Sur Jangal, Periano Ghundai, Mughal Ghundai and Kaudani as well as at Dabar kot, suggests that they could be assigned to Phase-III.[24] (F-16)

These terracotta figurines of Mother Goddess both from Kulli and Zhob valley terminate at the waist in a slightly splayed manner with bottomed pedestals. The arms are akimbo with hands on hips. In a solitary case, the hands are found raised above the breasts. The faces of the figures are marked out of clay into fantastic aqualine profiles making an absurd caricature, with eyes made with centrally pierced and applied pellets with no indication of the mouth.

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The breasts are shown but there is no exaggeration to suggest stress on maternal aspects; and indeed in many examples no indication of breasts is available. These are covered under heavy strings of beads, which these figurines are so often shown as wearing. Though the faces of the figurines were quite sketchy, yet a great deal of care was lavished on the representation of their head-dress and ornaments. The hair is dressed to a high pile in front and held back by a fillet above the forehead and the greater part was looped into a thick, heavy locks of hair which rested at the back. Over the ears were worn conical ornaments, as have been found on the figurines of Harappa. The neck is decorated with a complex arrangement of beads occasionally with *cowrie* shells.

The bangles and armlets still liked by the Indian girls are shown on the wrists and arms of these Kulli figurines. Several of these bangles are shown at each wrist, but the left arms only have further bangles along or at the elbow, which might imply a garment of Sārī type worn in such a manner as to leave this arm bare. As mother, though she is represented as a benevolent goddess, the reverse of some of the Kulli figurines represents the terrifying skull aspect, which could be the form of Kālī or Caṇḍī

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Some of the figurines of the deity from Zhob Culture, as already stated, end at the waist like Kulli culture figurines described above. The nose in such cases is elongated and painted and the mouth is an applied clay strip with a transverse cut. The eyes are thick pellets of clay having circular holes. The figure is awe-aspiring almost like an owl. The coiffure is covered by what looks like a piece of cloth, the ends of which roll on the shoulders. The breasts have applied nipples. Stuart Piggot is of the opinion that it could hardly be a toy, rather a grim embodiment of the Mother Goddess who is also the guardian of the dead. The Mother Goddess figurines of Zhob type were also found from the surface as was from the periods II and III, from Damb Sadat as well as from Rana Ghundai. This suggests that Mundigak III corresponds with these periods in its early phase, while in its later phase it is contemporary with Harappan period. Two of these figurines have awe-aspiring faces, while the third one has the artistic blending of its own. These figurines, though are quite fragmentary, but preserve the charm of their own. The site Rana Ghundai[25] is about 14 km away from Loralai, towards the east and was excavated by Ross in 1946, which revealed black deposits of five periods A to E from bottom upwards. The earliest period A belongs to Aceramic Neolithic[26] and produced clay figurines attributable to those of the Mother Goddess.

The figurines of Mother Goddess from Mehi have a charm of their own. They end below the waist in pedestals, both the hands rest below the waist in the front. The arms have bangles while the fingers of the hands are distinctly shown. The necklaces have pinholes and the breasts are not prominently shown. In Mehi two types of figurines have been found as is evident from the following account:–

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(a) Goddess

The terracotta figurines of the Mother Goddess from Mehi, have prominent breasts and are less elaborately decked with ornaments. In some specimens the ornaments are not shown. In others, the presence of the elaborate coiffure with long tresses is sufficient to mark the sex. Throughout there is an identical and very archaic treatment of the face which is almost bird like, and also, where enough of the figurine is preserved, the same pose of hands placed against the breast or the waist can be seen. (Pl. 1-a)

It is important to note that here as in the case of all representations of the goddess found at other sites and figurines, wherever their lower portions survive, invariably end below the waist in a flat base. This proves that all of them were meant to be set up, presumably on some stand or platform. Variety is introduced mainly in the treatment of hair-dress and of the ornaments around breast and neck. Obviously the ancient modeller found it easier to work on such details in flat. Particularly ornate jewellery is shown in some cases. No indications of dress are attempted; for the folds sometimes seen on the arms of some figurines are probably meant to represent armlets. Just as in the case of the humped bull, all figurines of the goddess were damaged, often lacking the head, arms or lower portion of the body. Curiously enough, the only almost perfect specimen is slightly damaged in face, in one of those found on the burial deposit of ashes and bones.

(b) Mother Goddess

The figurines of Mother Goddess[27] are rare at Mehi but closely corresponding specimens have been found at the Chalcolithic sites of Zhob, which may have been meant to represent a female divinity, the Mother Goddess, whose worship meets us in widely distant parts of Asia and Europe throughout historical times. The fact that she has been found at Kulli site, shown once with the babe in her arms may offer support to this idea. But the close connection which in early mythological belief, often appears between the Mother Goddess and the Goddess of the Earth ought not to be left out of sight. Whether the fact of the body of our goddess being shown in all those numerous figurines only down below the waist, offers a clue pointing the latter direction.

Kolwa

Five small terracotta figurines of the goddess, which are rare specimens had been found at the Chalcolithic sites of Periono Ghundai, Kandani and Dabar Kot. Three of them are badly broken, but one is particularly intact except for the tip of the nose, right down to the waist, below which it ends, as do all these figurines from other sites. What imparts particular interest to this representation is the suckling babe shown here at the breasts of the figure. This strikingly

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confirms the view that these figurines represent the divinity of fertility, the Mother Goddess of many ancient Eastern cults. The treatment of the face is almost bird like with eyes which look side ways are distinctly archaic, even more so perhaps than those at Zhob sites. On the other hand the treatment of the hair is little less primitive in the lowest section, where, there lay the fine jar two inches high and decorated with bold relief bands.[28]

(iii) Harappan Sites

The Chalcolithic culture of the Indian sub-continent available in Harappan and post-Harappan sites displays also the religious beliefs of the contemporary society. This culture was spread over a vast area of north-west of the Indian sub-continent and its remains discovered from various excavated sites have shed flood light on the female deities in adoration by the people. The Indus sites of Harappa, on the Ravi and Mohenjodaro as well as Chanhudaro on the banks of Indus, besides the Kulli and Zhob valleys and Mehargàrh are the prominent sites. It is curious that the Indus finds do not include any positive religious material, for religion has always played a dominant role in the ancient culture and especially in India, where it was the prime factor moulding the lives of the people for ages. All that we have to rely on for reconstructing the religion of the people, is the testimony of seals, sealings, figurines, stone images etc. Inspite of the meagreness of the available material, some light is thrown by them on ancient religion. A number of figurines of clay, terracotta, faience, etc., portray a standing figure, which is semi-nude, wearing a girdle or a band round her loins. With an elaborate head-dress and collar, occasionally with ornamental head and necklace. Sometimes the ear ornaments are like cups suspended on either side of the head. Some of the figures are smoke stained and it is possible that oil or perhaps incense was burnt before them, in order that the goddess might hear favourably to their petition. These figures are usually taken to represent the Mother or Nature Goddess. There is no reason to believe that the Cult of Mother Goddess originated in Anatolia or any other particular country because the concept of motherhood or of God and of the divinity of Nature had been quite common among the primitive people of the world and had been quite widespread and deep routed in India. The Mother Goddess is represented in every village as a tutelary deity (*grāma devatā*) and is known under various names such as *Mātā, Ambā, Ammā, Kālī, Karālī*, etc. Sometimes she is also dreaded, sometimes she is expected to ward off evil spirits or imparting fertility, etc. It may be mentioned that the *Ṛgveda* refers to Pṛthivī and Aditi which are akin to Mother Goddess.

(a) Harappa and Mohenjodaro Sites

A large number of terracotta figurines of nude females were found from Harappa as well as Mohenjodaro, and are paralleled by kindered examples from the neighbouring country of Baluchistan. Some of them, like the woman kneeling or holding a dish of cakes in her arms[29]

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are probably mere toys without any religious meaning. Others with children in their arms[30] or in state of pregnancy[31] may be assumed to be ex-voto offerings, perhaps with a magical significance, for the purpose of securing off-springs, though the possibility of the latter being apostropaic in character must not be lost sight of, since it is well known that in some parts of India, a pregnant woman, like a new born child or a corpse is considered a taboo and that she too is also peculiarly liable to be attracted by evil spirit. The great majority of the figurines portray a very distinctive and generally uniform type, viz., a standing and almost a nude female, wearing a band and a girdle about her loins, with elaborate head-dress and collar and occasionally with ornamental cheek cones and a long necklace. In many of these figurines, the ear ornaments take the form of shell-like cups suspended by hands on either side of the head, while the head-dress above, is more or less like this crescent.[32]

The figurines of the goddess from Baluchistan are of two types, both differing from those of the Indus valley, in that they are not full length images, but consist of the head and the body only, ending in a flat base; like many of the images of Minaon and Mycenaean origin. In the first type the face is pinched in like a bird's and the goddess wore long and generally elaborate necklaces with shell or other pendants attached–features which are common also in the Indian figurines; but the bands are shown resting either on the waist or on the breasts, which as a rule are not prominent.[33] Specimens of this type were recovered from Kulli and Mehi at the latter of which sites, they were found along with other objects in Chalcolithic burials. The pottery associated with them differs in style with the common red and black painted ware of Mohenjodaro and Harappa, which is also found on certain sites in Northern Baluchistan, but their exact date is not certain, though they could be contemporary to those from Harappa and Mohenjodaro. The second type which comes from Kandani, Mughal-Ghundai and Periano Ghundai in Zhob, belongs also to Chalcolithic Age, but is shown by pottery accompanying it to be later than the first. In this type the goddess[34] wears a sort of hood over her head and a series of necklaces of torques treated very formally and sometimes appearing like the pictorial of three faced god (Śiva?). Her face instead of being bird-like, is flat and horribly grotesque, with high forehead, cavernous eyes and distorted mouth. Both of these legless types suggest a parallel with the later images of the Earth-goddess, in which she is portrayed half emerging from the ground and it may be that this in fact was the idea underlying all the half or three-quarter length figurines of the goddess. While however, there is nothing at all repulsive in respect of the earlier type, the later type is clearly intended to inspire horror and can hardly fail to remind us of the terrible and the loathly images of malignant Kālī, of which the figurines may be taken to be an early prototype (Pls 3-12).

But instead of Kālī it would possibly be more appropriate to call the terrific looking terracotta figurines to be the prototype of Cāmuṇḍā, a terrific goddess of the medieval times,

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who is represented in the form of a human skeleton and the aforesaid figure has greater resemblance with Cāmuṇḍā, rather than Kālī.

The female figurines akin to those found in the Indus Valley and Baluchistan have been found in large numbers and over a wide range of countries between Persia and Aegan, notably in Elam, Mesopotamia, Transcaspia, Asia Minor, Syria, Palestine, Cyprus, Crete, the Cyclades, the Balkan and Egypt. In some of these countries they appear later or more spasmodically than in others, but there seems little doubt that the various groups are traceable, if not directly to common origin, at any rate to a community of religious ideas shared by the countries, where they are found; and generally accepted view concerning them is that they represent the great Mother or Nature Goddess, whose cult is believed by some to have originated in Anatolia or Phrygia and spread thence throughout the West Asia.[35] The correspondence, however, between these and those found over the banks of the Indus is such that it is difficult to resist the conclusion that the latter also represented a Mother or Nature Goddess and served the same purpose as their counterparts in the West, viz., either votive offerings, or as cult images for household shrines and this conclusion is strengthened by the fact that the range of these figurines now extends practically without break from Indus to Nile over the tracts that are not only geographically continuous but which in Chalcolithic Age were united by common bond of culture. Even, however, without the analogy of these figurines from western Asia, there could be a strong presumption in favour of examples from Mohenjodaro, Harappa, Baluchistan and other proto-historic sites in India, being the effigies of Great Mother Goddess or of one of her local manifestations. For in no country in the world has the worship of Divine Mother been from time immemorial so deep and ubiquitous as in India. Her shrines are found in every town and hamlet throughout the length and breadth of the land. She is the Mother or Great Mother and prototype of power (Prakṛti) which also developed into Śakti. Marshall has also reported the discovery of female terracotta figurines of Harappan period from Taxila (Figs. 17, 18, 20-22).

Chanhu-daro

Numerous female figurines, some of which could be termed as those of the Mother Goddess[36] were unearthed from Chanhu-daro as well. They could be divided into the following types:–

(1) Hollow female figures with swollen bodies.

(2) Solid seated figures with rudimentary legs.

(3) Solid female figurine with a pan before her containing a quern. (This little model was possibly a play-thing rather than a religious votive object).

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Some of them with their squat swollen bodies, recall similar figurines unearthed from Mohenjodaro and Harappa, though they differ from them in standing upon flat, or more or less open bases. These figurines have been believed to represent Mother Goddess. The legless figurines of Chanhu-daro which are comparable with certain truncated female figurines from various Pre-Harappan sites in Northern and Southern Baluchistan, are believed to represent Earth Goddess by some scholars. But since they were serving a utilitarian purpose and were so made to stand securely with their feet, they could be treated as household deities, to be kept on a shelf or in a little recess in the wall. A curious feature of some of the Mother Goddess figurines from Mohenjodaro is that the backs were left unfinished and particularly their jewellery, which was shown only in the front, suggesting that the back of the figurine was not intended to be seen. Some of the figurines from Chanhu-daro, however, were as well finished behind as in the front. Some of the figurines of Mother Goddess from Mohenjodaro and Harappa, though of a different type from those found at Chanhu-daro, wear short skirts; the latter were, however, lacking in squat and long bodied types of figurines from Chanhu-daro (Fig. 19; Pls. 13-14).

The most striking features of the female figurines of Chanhu-daro is the head-dress, sometimes the high fan-shaped affair, so common at Mohenjodaro and Harappa, but without the curious pannier-like appendages which were so fashionable. These fan-shaped head-dress at Chanhu-daro was ornamented in various ways. In some cases it represented[37] as a band of material or embroidery which was perhaps studded with sequins or other ornaments. In some, three bands are shown on the left side and four on the right, one of which alone was decorated.[38] In one case the figure has six simple bands[39] on either side, which it is possible, may have represented long locks of hair brought from the back of the head to the front over a framework of some kind. In another case[40] a thick strand of hair starting[41] from the top was taken round the back of the head to the right hand side, being apparently[42] held in place by strips passed round it with the ends secured by medallion well above the forehead. One end hangs as a loop over the left temple, another, which is prick marked dips as far as the neck. In yet another case, a thick strand starting from the left side of the head is brought round at the back to the right. The tight collars worn by the men and women[43] alike were made of large beads strung closely together, but the choker of the last mentioned figure is more solid than the other and suggests a metal original. Another figure (No. 3368) wears a similar collar. Long necklaces, each with a large pendant are also found.[44] Besides the bangles were worn upto the upper arms as well as the wrists,[45] from their great size they were doubtless made of pottery like the single and multiple pottery bangles that were found in large number at Chanhu-daro.

The pottery bangles used in the making of the figurines were hardly beautiful and were worn merely for mere decoration. The female figurines of Mohenjodaro were mostly shown

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wearing short skirts, except certain corpulent figures. In the female figurines in which arms are preserved, the left arm is held usually across the lower part of the body, while the right one is brought up between the breasts[46] or almost touches the mouth. A variant position[47] is also shown in one case where the left arm is held almost in the same position as the right one, the latter touching the mouth. With a few exceptions the eyes of both male and female figurines are represented by simple flat pellets of clay, more frequently than not intended, in the centre to indicate the pupils.

Diamabad

The Jorwe culture[48] produced several cult images including those of the Mother Goddess. These clay figurines are quite crude representations of the deity and only busts remain, showing prominent breasts. The heads, arms and legs are missing. The excavator[49] has observed about the find as follows:–

"In three of the specimens, heads are missing, but their presence is marked by an almost circular scar in the centre of the shoulders. Of the two specimens from pit. No. 207, one is represented by the bust, whereas in the other the left leg, right arm and head are missing. Both show fire cracks developed in the course of fire, but the latter possesses a large number of them on the back side. This side is ochre red in colour, with a few small black blotches suggesting that it was placed in the fire pit on the back, while it was in wet condition. The back of the bust is slightly concave, which suggests that it was placed over a pot sherd when it was offered in the fire-pit. It appears therefore that the images were prepared near the fire pit and offered then and there only. It appears that both of them were placed in the firepot after they were fashioned out of the fine clay. In the clay, grass was also mixed. One has turned light reddish brown and the other pinkish buff in colour due to firing. The bust has two short conical droopings and the head is represented by a low elevation. The two breasts are indicated by slight circular elevation. The other specimen with its head missing, has two prominent but small pointed breasts, a constricted waist, and roundish little stretched feet with conical end. The arms are short curved ones. The third specimen, recovered from house 43, is a bust without head both the arms are broken and two full breasts, one of which is damaged. The fourth example also, with its head missing, has burnished gray surface. Its arms and breasts are missing, the latter leaving its circular impression (Pls. 17, 18).

"There are two Mother Goddess figurines belonging to Phase V, made in copper sheets but have heavily corroded. One of them was found in a burial-72, a double urn child burial, in house 62, and the other in layer (2) of a trench in section IV. Both of them are with fan-shaped head. The body of the former is slightly wider, whereas that of the latter one is designed as in the Mother Goddess of terracotta from Nevasa. The fan shaped head resembles in the shape of the headgear of the figurines of Mother Goddess from Mohenjodaro and

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Harappa. The figurines of Mother Goddess of the Chalcolithic period from Diamabad has no parallel in India (Pl. 16).

Lothal

The cult of the Mother Goddess[50] was popular in the Indus valley, where a large number of almost nude terracotta figurines wearing garlands, girdles and head gears are found. As a fertility cult its origin is sometimes traced in Anatolia. Surprisingly enough the typical Indus Mother Goddess figure is conspicuous by its absence in Gujarat and Rajasthan. None has been found at Rupar, Alamgirpur, Rojdi and Desalpur. Out of five female figurines from Lothal, two are nude but none wears the ornaments seen on the Indus valley figures. Another figure with the pedestal base has a cup-like projection of pin-shed clay around the head, but no legs are shown and the arms are just suggested. The lothal figure may be said to show greater affinity with female figurines from Kulli than with those from Mohenjodaro. The Goddess is not represented on any Indian seal in the true sense of the term. Perhaps the worship of the goddess was a house-hold cult popular with a section of the population in the Indus valley, but not outside. This itself is an indication that the population was not homogeneous and no single faith was uniformally followed, much less rigorously enforced by the king or the priest, but the word *Nanā* used in the *Ṛgveda* for the concept of the mother could be a reference to the Mother Goddess (Pl. 19, Fig. 23).

Bhagwanpura

The place is situated on the right bank of river Sarasvatī.[51] The excavations at the site have revealed, late Harappan culture of sub-period IA, while in the sub-period IB, the late Harappan artefacts were discovered interlocked with the P.G.W. culture. Besides other objects the site yielded the voilin shaped Grey ware Mother Goddess, used as pendant.

Banavali

Banavali[52] is a Harappan site in the Hissar district of Haryana, which was excavated by R.S. Bist of the Archaeological Survey of India. The figurine of the Mother Goddess discovered from here has a parrot shaped mouth and vaulted head-dress. She wears a waist band at her waist. The eyes are shown by pinholes, on either side of the mouth. This indeed is a crudely carved figure and could belong to the folk goddess type or the deity of the common man, which was unearthed from period II of the mature Harappan culture.

Taxila

Though Taxila[53] is quite well a historic site, but Marshall has reported some terracotta female figurines, which belong to quite an early period and may well be dated back to the

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Harappan culture. A miniature female figure of terracotta with buff slip was discovered from Taxila. It has no arms. The legs end in a point immediately below the thighs, the division between them shown by lightly incised lines. The nose is pinched, as in pre-historic figures and around the neck is the series of bands or torques such as are also found on figures of Chalcolithic Age. These, as well as a hip girdle and cross straps in front of the body are shown by lightly incised lines. The hair which falls down the back of the neck, is square cut and is indicated by crossed lines. Behind the head in the middle of the hair, is a rosette and three other rosettes on the top of the head, in the ears are rosette ear-rings. The figure is possibly of pre-historic date, having found its way by chance into the later ruins of Bhir Mound, but it is also possible that this and other figurines came from ritual tanks (Nos. 158-159). A standing[54] female figure of fine terracotta adorned with fine incised lines and rosette was discovered from Sircap. It is like the one described above, but the legs are longer. There are four rosettes on the chest and the torque or necklace is modelled in relief. Its head is missing. The parallel lines around the legs represent series of anklets like those so commonly found on female figures at Sanchi. Besides the terracottas, the Mother Goddess figurines are also found in ivory from the same site. (F. 20-22)

Ropar

Ropar is lying on the left bank of the river Sutlej, where the river emerges into plains from the Shiwaliks. The excavations at the site were carried out by the Archaeological Survey of India from 1952 to 1955 which have revealed succession of occupation from the Harappan times to almost the modern period. Though it indeed is a Harappan site, but the specimens of the Mother Goddess unearthed from here belong more or less to historical period. Representation of the Mother Goddess[55] is available from the site in the form of broken objects dating back to above 600 BC. There is a crude object of bronze which shows the breasts and only one of the two eyes, clearly. The rest of the figure is not clear. The fine workmanship as well as the well-known polish associated with Mauryans is to be seen here on a small scale on a ring stone minutely carved with figures and motifs associated with the cult of the goddess of fertility or of Mother Goddess resembling the similar types of objects from Harappa, Taxila and other sites (Fig. 36).

(iv) Post Harappan Culture

Very few figurines akin to Mother Goddess have been found in the post-Harappan village settlements of various parts in India between C-1750-600 BC. Clay female figurines have been reported from Chirand and several Chalcolithic sites in the Deccan. These figurines are totally different from the Indus types lacking in ornamentation and having a plump phyisognomy and stumpy limbs. Most of them are headless as at Inamgaon, Navasa, Bilawali and Oriup. The

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Bilawali figurines are fiddle shaped. The Navasa and Navadatoli ones are applied to storage jars suggesting their protective or fertility function. The headless goddess within a clay box in a house in Inamgaon has perhaps links with west Asia. The arch formed by the legs of this figure is an important stylistic feature which is also noticed in the Mauryan terracotta figurines from Mathura, and the Kaolin female[56] figurines of Maharashtra, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh in the centuries around the Christian era. The southern regions of Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh have not yielded Mother Goddess figurines belonging to the period earlier than Ist century B.C. (Pls. 15-16)

There is a paucity of female figurines in the cultures associated with Ochre Coloured Ware and Painted Grey Ware in northern India. Lal Qila has just two specimens, Jakhera has one and two from the PGW levels which are contemporary with the early levels of NBPW.

All Mother Goddess figurines, appear though in a limited number in pre NBPW levels of Buxar and early NBPW levels of Pataliputra, Rajghat, Mathura, Masaon, Kausambi etc. Schematised ivory figurines with punched circlets, known as Eye Goddesses found at Alamgirpur (PGW) and Nagda, Ujjain, Prabhas Patan, (NBPW) could have been used as amulets or votive offerings during a smallpox epidemic[57] (Figs. 26-46, Pls. 22, 24-29).

Jorwe culture produced a number of female figurines as already stated, a glimpse of which is provided in the account that follows.

(a) Newasa

Excavations at Newasa, Chandoli and Inamgaon[58] have thrown positive light on the religion of the Chalcolithic people. At Nawasa one of the largest terracotta figurine of a female with a short conical head, having no face, short and stumpy, with outstretched arms, small breasts; featureless, lower part flat but was otherwise featureless, was found. It had a concave base evidently made for fixing on the clay base. Similar but smaller figure was also found.[59] (Pl. 16).

(b) Inamgaon

Inamgaon produced several such types and one or two of a male figure as well. One of the later is unbaked, and this seems to have a special significance, because even today, villagers, at the beginning of a feast prepare an identical clay figure, but call it, after the later Hindu fashion "Gaṇeśa". This could be interpreted in two ways. Either it represented the worship of a deity, specially prepared for the occasion, is comparatively new, but instead of making the figure of Gaṇeśa (a comparatively late deity of the Hindu pantheon) the figure of an old pre-historic deity is made, simply out of custom; or the practice is really old, but in conformity with the modern practice,[60] the figure is given a new name (Pl. 15).

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Both the early and late Jorwe people worshipped a nude Mother Goddess, with a head and without head (the later seated on bull) as well as the male gods. All or many of these were found in unbaked condition. This was possibly intentional, as proved by the occurrence of an oval clay box of the size of six inches long and two inches broad in the centre. The nude goddess was lodged in it. That both the goddesses were worshipped, as it is done today in millions of houses, keeping the goddess standing or in the vertical position, by providing a semi-circular clay support for the goddess, with head, and blind holes within the navel of the headless goddess, and in the back of the clay bull.

Whatever it be, such clay and terracotta male and female figures were worshipped all over Western Asia in Neolithic, Chalcolithic and the Bronze Age, and a large number of them have turned up from the said region of Sistan at Shehri Sokhta.

Exactly similar terracotta figurines do not occur in any of the Harappan sites, but have been noticed far eastwards at Uriup in Bihar and they also probably exist in many of the Chalcolithic sites of Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh, besides Gujarat-Saurashtra and Kutch. They could also be found at Diamabad as well besides in many other sites in Maharashtra (Pl. 27).

Indeed the people of the Jorwe culture had a private shrine for a mother goddess who was worshipped[61] in two forms, one having a head and the other without a head and standing or sitting on a bull. Since a similar figure of goddess, but considerably larger had also occurred in the earliest deposits of Jowre culture at Nevasa, one can rightly say that this was the goddess who was worshipped by Jorwe people. With the goddess was associated a bull. This as at Inamgaon, might have been represented in a realistic form, or as at Nevasa and Chandoli in another form, having a large bottle like opening for the mouth, small hump and tail, striped body and four low wheels on four feet.

From the careful way in which the Mother Goddess was kept in a clay box, it can be seen that the elaborate arrangements were made for worshipping it. These arrangements consisted of three separate parts a semi-circular stand for keeping the figure erect, while worshipping and holes in the body of the bull as well as in the navel of the headless goddess so that by inserting a small stick the figure could be shown or imagined to be seated or standing on the back of the bull.

Thus, for the first time, sufficient evidence is available to say that these clay figurines, with a stumpy formless head or without head, small outstretched arms, round and prominent breasts were meant for worship and were actually worshipped, possibly all over western Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh, where similar figurines occur on large storage jars and at Uriup in distant Bihar. According to Sankalia "The ultimate originators of this cult of the Mother Goddess seems to be *Homo Sapians* of western and eastern Europe who 20,000 years

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ago, created the first true art-painting, sculpture and engraving. It is indeed a moot point, how this cult reached India and became the religion of the Pre-historic Maharashtrians, unless we presume that there must have been some folk migration".[62] This view is contested by other scholars.

(v) Early Historical Sites

During the early historical period the Indian cultural scene was flooded with various types of gods and goddesses and in due course of time the iconography of these deities was also developed making them not only more appealing to the human mind but also to project them in complete human or even composite forms, besides adorning them with a variety of ornaments and hand attributes. But inspite of this new development in the Indian religious scene, the old practice of adoring the Mother Goddess in the indigenous form of terracotta figurines continued during the early historical period. For sometime she gained immense popularity among the masses as would be evident from some of the archaeological sites from the few centuries before the Christian era, right upto the Gupta period. During this period, she not only was projected in complete human form, but several decorative motifs were added to her figures. A. Ghosh has observed[63] on the subject as follows:–

"While the Deccan and south India were in the grip of megalithic culture, north India and the middle Gaṅgā Valley were witnessing the beginning of the early historical period. It is difficult to point out the precise or even the approximate time of this change, but the middle of the Ist millennium BC may be regarded as a convenient date. By this time some of the tribes mentioned in the later Vedic literature had carved out kingdoms for themselves dominated by the Kṣatrīya chiefs responsible for their establishment. The period was marked by significant changes in the cultural style of the people and the introduction of coinage which facilitated trade, highways, and promoted long-distance communications and commerce, extensive use of iron, structures of kiln burnt bricks, virtually forgotten after the Harappa culture and after all the origin of cities; many of them strongly fortifieted....."

In the early sub-period, 600-300 BC, moulded human terracotta figurines do not seem to have come into being, though one such figurine has been assigned to Period III, at Hastinapur where the piece in question represents a plaque of a standing female a type well known from stratum II, of Bhir Mound, Taxila.

Ahicchatra, Kausambi, Rajaghat and Mathura are among the sites, yielding human figurines in profilic number. Well-documented stratigraphic evidence comes from Ahicchatra. As there was a remarkable uniformity in the art of the clay modelling covering much of the area from Taxila to the sites in central India, the evidence of Ahicchatra may be regarded as typical. Before 300 B.C. hand modelled figurines of the so called Mother Goddess were prevalent.

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Their typical features include an exaggerated waist often provided with a girdle. In 300-50 BC when the practice of moulding was introduced, two types of figurines are noted, (i) standing female figurines and *mithuna* figures. The former types are not reported from Mathura. The female figurines with typical rounded face are profusely decorated and the headgear ornamentation often include the depiction of weapons like the spear and the sword. Apart from Ahicchatra such figurines have been reported from Sravasti, Kausambi and Rajghat, besides other sites in the central India. In the succeeding period 50 BC to AD 300 modelling in the round was introduced in a limited way. There was an increasing tendency towards the adoption of the style of stone sculpture.[64] (Pl. 25, Figs. 29-46).

(a) Taxila

Though it will not be possible to describe the specimens of the terracotta Mother Goddess figurines from all the sites in the country, but still, specimens of some selected sites are discussed in the account that follows. To begin with we may concentrate on Taxila, which is comparatively closer to the Chalcolithic sites of Mohenjodaro and Harappa and has produced Mother Goddess figurines of different types in different periods.

(i) *Later figures under Graeco Parthian influence:* These figurines come from the Parthean city of Sircap[65] and their modelling is influenced by Hellenistic work but in some cases the arms end in points just below the shoulders as they do in primitive Indian figures. On the other hand, the legs are well formed in all the specimens and the thighs are strongly developed, as they frequently are in Indian figures, notably in Mathura school. A few of such specimens are described below:–

(ii) An image in the round of pot-stone, representing a goddess[66] seated over a four-legged throne. She is clad in classical dress consisting of a long tunic and mantle; in her left hand she holds a horn of plenty (*cornucopia*); her right hand is wrapped in her mantle. On her head is a low *palos*. Over the stool is a cover let with chaquered pattern. The type is common throughout the Graeco-Roman world and has been identified variously as Demeter, Tyche, Fortuna, Bona Dea ect. As early as the middle of the sixth century BC. Boupalos of Chios executed an image of Tyche, which according to Pausanias had a *palos* on her head and held in her hand what the Greeks called 'the horn of Amalthea'. In India, this type is familiar on coins of Azes I and II and appears to have been adopted for the Yakṣī Hāritī, whom this image possibly represents.

A standing figure of chloritised[67] mica schist, in the round is represented naked save for a shawl or *sārī*, which falls over the left arm and below the hips. The left hand holds the hem of the *sārī*; in the right hand which is raised to breasts, is a lotus. Her ornaments consist of a hip girdle (*mekhalā*) with square clasp in front and three rows of beads; a breast chain,

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crossed both front and back; bracelets; armlets; and a narrow *taenia* across the forehead. The hair is taken back from the forehead and falls in a long plait down the back with a few curls on two shoulders. On the crown of the head, at the back, is an ornamental medallion. The type appears to have been derived from a Greek Aphrodite type, but is much Indianised. It may have intended to represent and Indian Yakṣī or fairy; but it seems more likely to be a goddess holding a lotus in her hand, who is portrayed on some autonomous coins of Taxila and may represent either the Tyche[68] of the city or more probably Māyā. In the Gandhara school to which the sculpture belongs, the figures in the round are quite rare and for the most part earlier than the usual *alto rilievos.*

(iii) *Female deity standing with full flowing skirt:* With a few exceptions, these figures are in relief[69] or ex-voto plaques. That they represent divine figurines is quite certain. In some cases (Nos. 90015) no folds are visible on draperies; in the reminder the folds are finely delineated. The nature of the lower garment is not quite clear. In some it appears to be a *Sārī*, in others, it is more like a skirt, while in a solitary case it seems to be like a pair of trousers, worn by the people of the area even in modern times. In some specimens, the arms are at full length, holding out the skirt or trousers on either side of the legs, in others, the right or the left hand rests on hips, while the other hand hangs down. None of these figurines is later than the second century BC.

(iv) *Female deity*[70] *standing with bird in left hand and wearing tight shirts:* The veil and braided hair of such figurines fall from the crown on either side of the head. Her ornaments comprise of a hip-girdle (*mekhalā*), backlaces, bangles and rosettes on the head. The bird which may be a dove, calls to mind a fimiliar type of Aphrodite. This type strikingly resembles such figures as in the British Museum Nos. B/452, 458 from Naukratis or C 232-52 from Cyprus; and it is noteworthy that the arms retain the Ionian attitude proper to the female sex. Possibly the type may go back to an Ionian (*Yavana*) tradition introduced into the Punjab during Achaemenid times.

(v) *Draped female deity seated with bird in folded*[71] *arm:* She wears a long neck-lace reaching to the hips. It is noteworthy that she is sitting over a high chair in European fashion. Her arms are crossed beneath the breast and in them she holds a bird. Strands seem to have been five on a few specimens and three on others. An applied collar was fixed round the neck but is now detached; a small perforation mark in the centre represents former prickings on collar. Another pendant necklace passing over the shoulders and the breasts, was made by a roll of clay, now partly preserved and marked by a series of pin-heads. It is clear that these were produced by affixing *bājrā* seeds (*Panicum spicatum*). The breasts were also applied but are now missing. The arms extended horizontally from the shoulders but were bent abruptly

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from the elbow; the fore arms are now missing. The specimen is closely related to the terracotta figurine.

Besides the above, several other figurines from the site have been reported having almost identical features.

(b) Sar Dheri

The Sar Dheri[72] type of archaic figurine display the characteristics by which these types could be recognised. The outstanding feature is formed by applying oval pellets of clay to the face and incising them from nose to ear by stroke of some sharp edged instrument. Some of these figures are chinless, some have rudimentary chins, some have applied mouths, some have no mouths at all, but with the exception of one specific type, in which, the eyes are worked up from the face material by modelling and then incised, the eyes of all are applied and incised. Though the legs of these figures are indicated by a peg shaped tapering off of the figurine, this is so often deeply divided at the back, that the lower part of the figure splits apart in the middle and half figures can be found quite commonly. Half figure divided in this way have also been found at Harappa. These "Sar Dheri" figures have rosetted head-dresses of many types but they all preserve a family likeness and are quite unmistakable. All these figurines are apparently naked except for necklaces, sometimes the *cannavira* or similar ornament, and a girdle. In one case, however, instead of the normal small triangle indicating the pudanda, there is a sprig of a plant. These figurines are believed to belong to about 200 BC (*J.I.S.O.A.*, IX, 1943, p. 146).

(c) Gandhara

D.H. Gordon has discussed about the most common type of terracottas from Gandhar.[73] This is the type named after Sahri Bahlol. This is a very primitive type and includes three related forms of terracotta figurines. The first is a female figure with outspread arms and legs, very crudely made having a high comb like head-dress, less fan shaped, as a rule than the normal Harappa period head-dress. There is no nose, the face is slightly pinched forward, having no eyes and an incised mouth, most of these figurines have long lobed ears. The second is a cylindrical pedestal figure of intermediate sex with the same style of head and with joined hands, the third has the same head and joined hands, but balances on three legs. A related figure of a somewhat sophisticated appearance was found at Bhita and dated as early Kuṣāṇa, it is not likely that any one of the figures is earlier than the Ist century A.D.

(d) Akhtar Dheri

The third important archaic type is spade shaped figure. These are found at Sar Dheri and Akhtar Dheri[74] (Nisatta) which portray the transitional type between the naturalistic figure

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and the stylised one in which the legs have disappeared and only the pubic triangle is left to symbolise the female generative principle. There is a spade shaped figure[75] with a four-sided lower portion instead of the more usual triangle; this has the style of head covered with small indentations and pricking which is put forward as the Akhtar Dheri type, it being the style of figurines most commonly found at that site. From Sar Dheri comes a further spade shaped type, smaller and more fragile, than is usually the case, exhibiting bisexual attributes, combining both male and female principles, a protuberance in the centre of the female triangle must indicate the combined *lingam* and *yoni*, so often found in Hindu iconography. The primitive figurines from Mathura[76] are of the same clay and the same body forms, the same style of applied and incised ornaments and the same style of applied hair as the female figures with moulded faces, in fact, it is only the application of the face mould that differentiates one from the other. There is no doubt from this numbers that these figurines were a relatively mass production article, and it is the well produced face mould that prevents all the figures from sharing the same degree of primitiveness. When at a slightly later date the complete flat mould came into use the same difficulty prevailed and the inept modeller made use of the head portion of such a mould, the body, no doubt having been smashed, to give some degree of naturalism to his crude and primitive figure. It is possible that some more humble potter made this bit of a mould as a reject from a more up-to-date and prosperous business; it does, however, prove that the Mathura potter could produce only a most crude semblance of the human face and figure. These figures which were found in quite a large number, belong to the period prior to the second century BC.

(e) Mathura

The ancient site of Mathura[77] too has produced the figurines of Mother Goddess which belong to quite an early period. A figure of the deity from Mathura is crudely modelled and is baked grey. It is entirely modelled by hand, while the ornaments have been applied separately. The face is round, is punched and the eyes incised but the mouth is not shown. The mass of hair is gathered in a large loop, which is seen falling over the left shoulder. The indentations on the neck represents the collar and longish necklace is in applique. The breasts are small but the lips are broad. The girdle over them is shown by the incised lines. The figure belongs to 4th century BC. Another figurine from Mathura depicts the Mother Goddess standing slightly bent towards right. She has disc shaped ear-rings, necklace and bracelets, a smiling face, eyes wide open and a hair-do studded with ornaments. She wears anklets of three rows, while the girdle has fine rows. She is also wearing high thick boots. Another[78] figurine belonging to the same period, depicts the goddess almost nude[79] (Pl. 24). These figurines have been described by V.S. Agrawala, a few examples of those relating to the archaic period preserved in the Mathura Museum are given here under:–

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(1) (No. MM-KT/161). Terracotta female goddess figure. The most characteristic feature is the nose formed by pinching the clay together, so that it forms a continuous vertical projection from the forehead which is a horizontal plane. The hairs are indicated by the slightly slanting ridge above the forehead. Of the two eyes one is not in symmetry but they are marked by two converging lines with the pupil indication in the centre. In no terracotta of this type at Mathura do we find the lids being affixed separately as is in the Indus Valley terracottas. The mouth is an inconspicuous depression. There are no ears or ear rings yet evolved in the process. The neck is conspicuous but absolutely devoid of ornaments. The arms are horizontally extended and taper irregularly like the ends of a screw driver. The breasts and hips are enormously developed. The navel is indicated by pinched circlet. Of ornaments, only a double girdle is indicated by two rows of punched circlets. The body is nude, still the mount of Venus is concealed and seldom shown in the earliest specimens. An arch separates the legs which are dwarfish in proportion to the figure. The slight curve at the end of the left leg marks the foot, the corresponding portion in the right leg is broken (Fig. 30).

(2) Terracotta bust of goddess (MM-2220). The nose in this case is ponderous and jutting out like a clumsy beak. There are two perforations for the nostrils in the depression, which is the place of the mouth. The hairs were probably indicated at the back in the form of strands, but now chipped off. The eyes are incised in lozenge shape without mark of the pupils. The ears have suffered the fate of hair. Round the neck is a conspicuous necklace or possibly a thick garland, arranged on both shoulders and falling besides the two breasts. Smaller pinched circlets cover the surface of the necklaces. The breasts were attached as small prominences with the nipples indicated by a circlet and not worked out of the material of the torso. The left breast is preserved, the right one having fallen off together with the portion of the big necklace on the side. The arms do not extend horizontally as before, but taper downwards.

(3) Terracotta female goddess (MM-2587). The nose and the two eyes are identifiable which look like those of an eagle. No separate indication for the mouth, ears or hair is available. The collar for the neck is remarkable for its central lotus; punched with minute circlets. The breasts are prominent and are separated by a deep valley; the right breast has the nipple mark. The region of the abdomen and waist bears the same punch marks. The girdle with a similar design is visible only in traces over the left hip. The legs are like tapering stands but markedly separated. One may justly identify in the facial expression, the features of an eagle or *Suparṇa* and hence in the figure itself, the goddess *Suparṇa* also called Vinatā, the mother of the great Eagle or Garutmā Suparṇa (गरुत्म सुपर्ण) is represented. The central lotus in the ornament of the neck may be indicative of her association with the solar deity who

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is also called Garutmā Suparṇā in the Vedas or Khagendra or the lord of the denizens of the Purānas by a pun on the word *Khaga* which means both a star and a bird on account of the movement in the sky. Some of the figures belong to the pre-Mauryan[80] date.

(4) Terracotta bust of goddess (MM-221;). The eyes are incised and diamond shaped. The nose is continuous with the forehead and shows a pig-like appearance. The mouth is open and V shaped. There are two heavy ear rings in the left ear, and probably one in the right ear. Three gold leaves with vertical line or incisions adorned the hair and probably served as fasteners. Below the central leaf which is also smaller is a ring-punch which may mark the ceremonial dot or a pendant pearl on the forehead. The neck region is adorned with four bands of ring punches which most probably stand for pearl necklaces. The necklace hangs to the upper level of the breasts and is adorned by three horizontal leaves shown in relief and bearing vertical lines as marks of ripples in the original ornament; the leaves alternate with circlets. A pearl necklace also runs along the two shoulders.

(5) Terracotta female goddesses (MM-2344, 1646, 1705;). The facial features of all the three are the same pig like character. The leaf ornaments on the head are also identical. One of them has two large ear rings in her left ear and a lotus. It is the lotus stalk curled twice to form the ear ring and then terminating in a full-blown lotus at the top (*mṛṇāla kuṇḍala*). No. 7 has only a single ear-ring while No.8 has none. The collars also differ; No. 6 has a necklace; No. 7 has a necklace with attached leaves and also a central tassel hanging between the breasts; No. 8 has a duplicate collar and necklace. The waists are slender. The hips are very broad and the figures are of steatopygous class. This seems to have been an ideal beautiful form recognised, very early even in the time of *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*:-

एवमिवहि योषां प्रशंसन्ति-पृयुश्रोणिः ।
विमृषष्ठान्तरांसा, मध्ये संग्राह्येति ।।

(I. 2.5.16)

(Thus they praise a woman who is broad-hipped, of smooth breast region and slender waisted)

And again comparing the feminine form with the shape of the Uttarvedī, it says:-

पश्चाद्वरीयसीपृश्रोणिवैयाषां प्रषंशसन्ति ।।

(Ibid II. 5.1.11)

(A woman is praiseworthy who is wider behind and broad hipped).

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The steatopygous feminine form has remained the ideal of beauty throughout the Indian Art, the railing women of Mathura offer many instances. The *Śatapatha* carries further the comparison of the female form with the *vedī* and says that they make a navel, as it were, in her middle मध्येनाशिकामिव करोति (*Ibid*, III.5-1.11) The navel is notably marked in the female figure we are treating. All the three have conspicuous girdles. The zone of No. 6 is fluted with incision lines, that of No. 7 is of cable design and that of No. 8 consists of conical peaks. The three strands of hair too are common to all. The most peculiar feature in No. 6 is a pair of ears standing erect above the head. It is mentioned in the *Jaiminīya Brāhmana* that the earth has ears (कार्णनी वै भूमिरिति) (*Ibid;* I. 226). This feature combined with several others, help us in identifying these figures of feminine divinity with Earth Mother.

The Mother Goddess figurines were discovered from stratum VIII, (c. 300-200 BC). Two of them are in grey colour and are of the same type and style as a considerable group of clay figurines recovered from Mathura.[81] Outside Mathura, similar female figurines of early period are quite rare and these two figurines may well have been imports from Mathura rather than the products of the local school. These archaic figures are entirely modelled by hand and seem to be the work of skillful craftsmen intent on doing their job well in the absence of moulds. The figures conform to the pre-determined iconographic pattern. An outstanding feature is the applied and punched decoration used freely with variations. At time the collar and the necklace and the girdle are applique. There is no instance of applied eye at Ahicchatra or Mathura, although this is a common feature in the Mother Goddess figurines from Gandhara.[82]

The identification of the goddess is quite a relevant question. That the craftsman attempted to give expression[83] to a formula comprising of certain well defined features must be readily conceded. The bird or animal like face, prominent breasts, broad hips, triple-rosetted headdress, collar, necklace and conspicuous girdle form the elements of this formula.[84] In none of the figurines of this group from Ahicchatra, or Mathura, is nudity ever indicated, although any signs of drapery are also wanting. From the popularity and the wide range of formula at the back of these figures the inference is irresistible that they may represent a type of Mother Goddess. A nude female figure on an early gold leaf from Lauriya Nandangarh, was, however, discovered from stupa which belonged to the Asokan period (Pl. 23). Since the gold leaf came from a trench relatively high up on one of the mounds, it is unlikely to be earlier than the third century BC. As a matter of fact this gold leaf figure is in the same tradition as the nude female figures in bone at Sirkap, which are believed to be of Indo-Greek or Indo-Parthian date and each one of which is an exact counterpart of the Sar Dehri type even in copying the applied and incised eyes (Pl. 23, 29-35).

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II. ŚAKTI WORSHIP

Śakti worship was of great antiquity in India. Evidently it originated out of the cult of the Mother goddess and was closely connected with the cult of Śiva. Moreover, it exhibits features which bear a striking resemblance to those of certain pre-historic cults in western Asia, that it cannot be passed in silence or ignore its presence among the Indus valley people. The underlying principle of Śāktism is a sexual dualism, which has been aptly described as "duality in unity". In this development of the primitive mother worship, the goddess was transformed into personification of female energy (Śakti) and as the eternal productive principle (*prakṛti*), united with eternal male principle (*puruṣa*) and became the creator and mother of the Universe (Jaganmātā or Jagadaṁbā), including the gods themselves. In her supreme form she was identified as Mahādevī, the consort of Śiva, with whose worship, Śaktism became inextricably bound up, yet she herself was conceived of even as the creator of Śiva and superior to him, just as her lesser emancipations, the Śaktis of Brahmā, Viṣṇu and the rest of the gods were superior to their own male counterparts. Just as Śiva combined in himself the powers of all other gods and in the eyes of the later votaries because of the Supreme god (Mahādeva), so his female counterpart became the Supreme Goddess in the Śākta pantheon, reflecting in her own personality all female manifestations of other divinities. Like Śiva himself, she had a two-fold nature. She was conceived as the power which creates and destroys, the womb from which all return; the mysterious force behind all appetites and passions. Like Śiva too, she was the arch source of strength, giver of supernatural powers and magical facilities. Many of the doctrines and rites that distinguish Śāktism are manifestly accretions of later Hinduism and in a large measure, the result of Aryan influence, but the basic elements are just as certainly non-Aryan as traceable to the idea of sexual dualism, which were as old as India itself. Indeed there is no extensive evidence of the presence of Śāktism at Harappa and Mohenjodaro and whatever evidence is, is merely suggestive but the presence of the nude female figurines as well as the *yoni* symbols, though interpreted to represent the Earth Goddess could very well be taken to represent the adoration of Śakti in one or the other form (Pl. 2).

In this connection J.N. Banerjea has observed, that "The worship of the female principle can be traced in the country, as in many other ancient countries of the world, to a very remote past. Many scholars have suggested that the cult of the Mother Goddess existed in some form or the other among the early Indus Valley people. Pottery images of the goddess have been found in course of excavations in the sites and Mackey is of the opinion that they were kept almost in every house in ancient Indian cities, probably in a recess or on a bracket on the wall" (*Early Indus civilization*, 2nd Edn. p. 34). The early Indus valley settlers appear also to have worshipped her in her aniconic form. Many ring stones discovered in the sites can justifiably be described as cult objects symbolising the mother aspect of the goddess, if they are studied alongwith phallic objects found there, which symbolise the father aspect of the

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god also worshipped in the Indus Valley. Mention has been made of the ornamental stone rings and discs of the Maurya and Sunga period, the association of which with the cult of the Mother Goddess can be sufficiently demonstrated. These very ancient finds can profitably be compared with the *cakras* and *yantras* of the more modern times, which were utilised by the Śaktas in the ritualistic worship of the Great Mother. The nude female figurines very often shown in these ornamental ring stones and discs, are almost invariably associated with plants and vegetation (sometimes with men and animals) and their parallel can be found among both the Indus Valley remains and the remains of the Gupta period"..... (*Ibid.*, p. 489). (Pl. 26)

Besides the nuclei of some other concepts of Śakti worship can be traced to the pre-historic times and the early stages of the cult of Śakti seems to go back to this remote past.

III. THE EARTH MOTHER OR EARTH GODDESS

It is widely believed that the Earth is the mother of men in several myths in India as well as in other countries. In some of the myths men emerge from stones, trees, plants etc., or again the creator moulded them from earth or clay. These are the divergent forms of the same beliefs. The Earth is also believed to be the womb of all the men, who return to her only to be reborn again. Hence the belief that the burial in the womb of earth is necessary to rebirth. That is why, it is often considered sufficient to throw some earth on the corpse to ensure rest to the spirit. This is evidenced from the large number of burials of the ancient times unearthed in the country from several Pre-historic sites. During those times the men were often buried in the position in which the child rests in the womb, or the dying were laid on earth or little earth was placed on them to facilitate the passage of the soul in its true home. Analogous is the custom of laying the newly born child on the ground, probably as cosecration to the Mother Earth or to obtain her protection and strength. All the beliefs and customs and the myths of heaven and Earth (so frequently mentioned in the Vedic literature as *Dhyāvā-pṛthivī*) which are treated as a divine pair, are result of the anology which man saw between the processes of conception and birth and those by which the earth brings forth. Thus in many communities in the ancient India, words for begetting, sowing, and ploughing for semen and the seed sown in the earth, stand for woman or the female organ of generation and the field or furrow, for the male organ and the ploughshare, are the same as are used metaphysically one for the other. Hence the Earth was regarded as fertilised by the heaven or by the rain. There is a myth according to which, the Earth when sown with stones, which spring up as men, or of plants growing from human semen spilt on the ground. Earth which as a fruitful body impregnated like a female was easily regarded as the mother of men. For this reason, the process or symbols of begetting are believed to re-act magically on Earth's productive power and conversely the rites for the Earth's fruitfulness on that of man. Certain rites helped the

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fruitfulness of Earth and man. Symbolic sexual acts as well as the sexual union, often perfomed on the fields, are held to assist fertility.

The marriage of Heaven and Earth is sometimes celebrated ritually, wherein the sun is supposed to come down and fertilise the Earth in the rainy season, this being made the occasion of a festival in which both the sexes participated. The women, because of the analogy of their fruitfulness with that of Earth or because they first practiced agriculture, have usually a prominent place in agricultural ritual and again because of Earth's influence on human productiveness, or because children were supposed to come from earth. The Earth Mother is projected in the Indian art traditions from the time immemorial and some of the salient features as are common, only formed in such projections are highlighted in the account that follows:

(i) Nudity

While dealing with the presence of the adoration of Earth Mother or the Earth Goddess in the Pre-Harappan and Harappan society, one has to keep in mind two aspects:- firstly that figures of the deity are mostly nude and that in majority of cases clay was used in making them though some specimens in ring stones are also available (Pl. 2).[85]

The nudity of the figurines need not surprise us, because it is common to most of the archaic figures. In fact what is usually regarded as the images of the Earth Mother are practically always nude; save for a quantity of jewellery; a wide girdle and their remarkable head-dress. The wide girdle or brief skirt, may be regarded as transitional stage, between a time when no clothing was the usual practice and the period when garments were regarded as adding to the dignity of the figure. This was not the case in Babylonia, where entirely nude figurines continued to very late times.

Besides the nudity in the Earth Goddess figurines, the other important feature in respect of these figurines was the use of clay in making them. A more probable reason for the use of clay even for elaborate figure intended to be worshipped, is that it was regarded as essential especially in very early times, that the Mother Earth should be that in which the material used for the making of the figure, should be of earth itself. Thus, both of them the Mother Earth and the earth were synonymous of each other.[86]

(a) Fertility Aspect (Terracotta figurines)

Most of the figurines of the Earth Mother were painted over with red slip or wash as of the many of the figurines in India today. In many countries, the red colour is regarded as distasteful to evil spirits. This colour would therefore be appropriate to several images. Red is also the colour of fertility and quite appropriate for the female figurines, which undoubtedly represent the Mother Earth or the lady of creation.[87] The use of red wash or slip for images

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of deities is not by any means confined to ancient and modern India alone, but had been in use in other countries as well. A female figurine of great antiquity from Badari in Egypt was undoubtedly coated with red colour and some early Cyproite figurines have the same treatment. On a small female figurine found at Hal-Tarxian, Malta, the red slip was polished as in some Indian figurines and certain figurines of Danubian civilization, unearthed at Vinca in Siberia are painted red. In Babylonia as well the clay figurines of deities and protective demons were so coloured.[88] It is, therefore, evident that the practice of painting of the female figurines as red was more common in the ancient past than we are aware of at present. For red ochre, especially when applied to smooth stone quite often scales off, after long burials in a damp or salty soil and it occurs repeatedly at Mohenjodaro that the red coating of the figurines is barely discernible.

(b) Ringstones

Ring stones and discs of stone with a variety of formal reliefs of decorative and cultic character have been found at many sites. The carvings occupy only on one face of the ring and are generally arranged in concentric bands with the conventional figure of Mother Goddess, palm trees with varying thickness. Some of them are without figures of the Mother Goddess. There is central hole in the ring.

The nude goddess of fertility also stands projected over a large number of stones discovered from Harappa, Mohenjodaro and various other sites of the historical period. The small ring stones suggest the adoration of *yoni*, the female symbol of generation was also prevalent, though not to such an extent as the worship of *liṅga*. It is, however, possible to take a group of ring stones as pedestals or basis of phallus. Hence unless the *liṅga* and one of the ringstone are found in close association, the correlation of the *liṅga* worship with ringstones cannot be established. However, some of these ring stones beautifully depict the nude goddess flanked often by birds, animals and trees, besides other decorative motifs. There is a peculiar charm about these ringstones; their exquisite workmanship, which is quite appealing and has earned a praise, unprecedented by any other work in stone, from the remote past. Some of them represent earliest effort in India, towards achieving perfection in composition of figures in relation to the plastic art. The projection of nude goddess in these ring stones is in the form of a nude female standing flanked by trees, with impressive head-dress, and sometimes flanked by lion and other animals.[89] In some cases, she is depicted along with flora and fauna, etc., as well. All these depictions show for one thing that she was not only considered to be the goddess of fertility because of her nudity, but also of the animals, birds or plants. The depiction of the goddess in ringstones is necessarily the earliest form of the deity since these ring stones are available from sites of Harappan culture (Pls. 2, 26).

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A large number of ringstones, ranging from half an inch to nearly four feet in diameter have been found in the course of excavations at Mohenjodaro and Harappa.[90] The larger ones are made of stone, while the smaller ones are of different materials like stone, faience, shell or imitation carnelian. The most typical of them have their upper and lower surfaces undulating; in others, the lower surface is flat and the top takes a quatrefoil form. Two explanations were suggested by scholars with regard to the nature of these objects; according to some, the larger ones of them served as architectural members, while according to the others, they were stone money. But Marshall has raised very reasonable objections to both these suggestions, and his original interpretation, that these are to be regarded as the representations of *yoni*, the female organ of generation as symbolising motherhood and fertility still appears to be current one. When they are compared to numbers of phalli–they are so realistic that they cannot be explained in any other way. (cf. the realism manifest in the earliest stone phalli of the historic period discovered at Gudimallam, Mathura and other places)-that have been discovered in the same region, there remains very little doubt about the truth of Marshall's interpretation. But it must be borne in mind that in the Indus Valley both *liṅga* and *yoni* stones appear to have served the purpose of cult objects separately, as seems to have also been the case with the early *liṅga* and *yoni* stones of subsequent days. In fact, the *liṅgam* in *arghya* (or *yoni*) design is comparatively late in appearance and even then the conventional *Śivaliṅgas* the spout-like projection from which the *pūjābhāga* rises upwards and which is taken by the uninitiated as symbolising *yoni*, is really the *praṇālī* or drain for the easy flow of the volume of water usually poured on the top of the emblem by the devotees of the god. These phalli and the ring stones thus appear to have separately symbolised the principles of virility and fecundity, both of which are highly esteemed by the people in all ages. Marshall has referred to his own discovery of several curious stone discs, three of which were unearthed from the Bhir Mound at Taxila; one from inside the structures uncovered near the foot of Hathial (Taxila) and one at Kosam. The Hathial one has been described by Marshall[91] thus:-

> "It is of polished sandstone $3\frac{1}{4}$ inches in diameter, adorned on the upper surface with concentric bands of cross and cable patterns and with four nude female figures alternating with honey suckle designs engraved in relief around the central hole."

Such types of ring stones were discovered from various other sites from the country. A comparative study of the Taxila ringstone with the one discovered from Rajghat (Varanasi) has been provided by J.N.Banerjea[92] as follows:-

"It will be of interest now to compare with the Taxila disc a partially broken reddish steatite circular disc, about $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches in diameter, found at Rajghat, which contains on outer side of its top surface a very well carved decorative design. The decoration consists of a palm

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tree with a horse by its side, beyond which a female figure holding a bird in her outstretched right hand (there is an indistinct object beneath her right hand and a taurine symbol near her left shoulder); then follow in successive orders–a long eared and a short-tailed animal, a crane, a goddess again with her hands this time stretched downwards, some object which is broken, a second palm tree, a bird, a small circular disc, a goddess again with a circular disc near her left shoulder, then a winged mythical animal and lastly a crane with crab like object near its legs. The goddess is thrice repeated with various accessory figures noted above in between her three representations. But one thing to be noted here is that unlike the Taxila disc, just described, the device appears here on the top surface near the central hole of this one is filled with beautiful scroll design. The carving is beautifully executed. This piece is in the collection of Bharat Kala Bhavan and can justifiably be assigned to the same age to which the Taxila, Kosam and other discs belong."

All the ring stones can justifiably be regarded as cult objects comparable with the ringstones of the Indus valley, on the one hand and the *cakras* and *yantras* of the Śāktas, the *Viṣṇupaṭṭas* of the Vaiṣṇavas and a *Yogapaṭṭas* of the Jains on the other. But their ideological association with the former viz., *cakras* and *yantras* of the later Śākta cult appears to be closer. Marshall, however feels that "these ringstones which are quite small and used perhaps as *ex-voto* offerings to the nude figures of goddesses of fertility, are significantly engraved with consummate skill and care inside the central hole, thus indicating in a manner that can hardly be mistaken, the connection between them and the female principle."

Amongst the archaeological sites from which the ringstones have been found are Taxila (Mauryan), Rupar Pd. III (6000-200 BC) and Purana Qila (Mauryan). The specimen from Taxila has already been discussed, but the one from Purana Qila, although fragmentary, is analogous to the Taxila one; except for a *pīpal*-like tree by the side of the goddess. Most interesting of these, is the broken ringstone from Ropar having figurines in the upper and lower bands. The upper one projects curved leaves hut with a seated male, facing a female devotee on one side and the representation of the Mother Goddess and a standing male on the other. The inner band is also relieved with a Mother Goddess and a conventional tree. An ornate disc from Vaisali, dated 100 BC to AD 100, has a decorative edge and a central circle containing a mutilated figure surrounded by the representations of the Mother Goddess and the conventional trees.

The presence of the Mother Goddess figures on these rings and discs associates them with the cult of Earth Mother, Śakti and Śri as objects of daily worship. Out of the four ring stones which were found from Taxila three were in Bhir Mound and one in the second stratum of Sirkap, but the style and workmanship of the latter, leave no room for doubt that it belongs to the same Maurya age, as others. The peculiar sanctity with which these ring stones are

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invested in India, is quite well known and could be traced back to an immemorial age. Large number of them dating from the fourth or third millennium BC have been unearthed at Mohenjodaro and Harappa. Some are bigger than a finger ring, some so large that it takes half a dozen men to lift them. While some famous examples of today which are still under adoration may be mentioned as the Srigundi stone at Malabar Point near Bombay, which is believed to purify those who crawl through it, and relieve them of disease and sickness, and the equally potent one at Satruñjaya, the hole which is known as *Muktadvāra* or the door of absolution—the door which gives happiness to any one who can creep into it. The idea underlying all these ring stones is the same as *yoni*s of female symbols of generation–the idea being that those who pass through them, are not born again, while in the case of the smaller stones of the same class the mere passing of the hand or the finger through them is an act of spiritual virtue. That the same idea attached to the specimens found at Taxila (possibly ex-voto offerings) is evident from the nude figure of a goddess of Fertility which are engraved with consummate skill inside the central hole, thus indicating in a manner that cannot be mistaken the connection between them and the female principle. It is not unlikely that the Fertility Goddess here represented, may have been identified with the Earth goddess-Prithivī. The earth itself was conceived of a wheel shaped in the *Ṛgveda* (X. 89.4) and is also defined as circular in the *Śatapatha Brahmāṇa*. A disk of a terracotta bearing an image in relief of a Fertility Goddess was unearthed from Bhita, which belongs to Kuṣāṇa or Early Gupta period. It depicts the goddess with legs drawn apart with a lotus (emblem of birth) issuing from her neck. A similar plaque was found from Kosam, which is currently preserved in the Indian Museum,[93] Calcutta.

Another stone disc from Taxila has been described by Marshall[94] as under:- "There is stone sculpture from Taxila which depicts a female figure in the round probably dating back to the Ist century BC. The pose is rigidly frontal, legs together, and hands are on hips. Save for the ornaments which consist of anklets, girdles, crossed breast chain, armlets and bangles, the figure is nude. The hair, which is treated like a wig in front, is taken back from the forehead and falls in long plait down the back, with a few curls on each shoulder. On the top of the head is a low *polos*. Beneath the small base is a projecting tenon, evidently intended to fit into a socket hole. In ancient times the image was broken in two at the knees and in order to repair it, two small holes were drilled between the legs, one above and one below the fracture. The stiff frontal pose and the *polos* on the head suggest a caryatid, but the figure is so small that it could hardly have served the purpose. Possibly the sculptor was intending to portray an archaic type, such as that of the Mother or Earth Mother-which was still being perpetuated at Taxila as late as the first century AD."

Similar stone discs have also been found at Pataliputra, (Murtaziganj), Vaisali, Sankisa, Rajghat, Bhita, Jhusi, Kausambi, Purana Qila, Delhi, Mathura and Rupar. In all these cases

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the discs represent steatopygous goddess with schematic curls, torque and girdle who stands in a frontal hieratic pose as on the gold plaque from Lauriya Nandangarh and Piprahwa. The seasonal fertility drama is enacted on some discs and a Rajgir steatite plaque showing the male partner of the goddess propitiating her, offering her a cup and playing a musical instrument. The goddess is shown here as the supreme figure with a subordinate male partner. She is associated with animals, birds, lotus, palm tree and the crescent moon, which suggest her relationship with Nana-Artemis-Diana[95] group of fertility goddesses.

IV. ŚĀKAMBHARĪ

In the *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa*, the goddess promises to save the mankind, badly affected by the severe draught lasting for over a hundred years. The term Śākambharī is more explicit in its historical bearing when the people suffered due to a natural calamity by the failure of rain for a period of a hundred years and the goddess on that occasion assumed the form of Śākambharī. This possibly refers to the Śaka Kuṣāna rule under the emperors Kaniṣka, Huviṣka and Vāsudeva whose last year of reign is recorded in an inscription of 98 Saka Era. Two aspects of the episode are quite significant here, firstly the goddess is called Śākambharī and secondly that she declares that she would produce vegetation out of her own body:-

ततोऽहमखिलं लोकात्मदेहसमुद्भवैः ।
भरिष्यामि सुरा शाकैःरावृष्टै प्राणधारकैः ।
शाकाम्भरीति विख्यातं तदायास्याम्यहं भुवि ।।

(*Davī Māhātmya*, 11.45)

(At that time, O gods, I shall support the whole world with life sustaining vegetables, born out of my own body, until the rain set in again. I shall then be famed on earth as Śākambharī).

This Śākambharī aspect of the goddess, was projected in some seals from the Harappan as well as the sites of historical period.

An oblong terracotta seal with scenes depicted on both sides was unearthed at Harappa which most probably contains a representation of the same goddess with some additonal traits; The right side of the obverse is occupied by a nude female figure having been placed up side down with legs drawn wide apart and with a plant issuing from her womb. Her arms are shown in the same position (in which those of the prototype of Śiva-Paśupati are shown); at her left side are shown a pair of tigers standing facing each other, which have been regarded as genii by Marshall, the animal ministrants of the deity. The left part of the reverse side of this seal contains two human figures, one male and the other female; the latter seated with her dishevelled hair, raises her hands in suplication to the male who stands in front of her in

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a threatening attitude with a shield like object and a sickle shaped instrument in his left and the right hands respectively. Marshall suggests that the scene is intended to portray a human sacrifice connected with the earth goddess depicted on the other side, with whom the genii are also associated. This striking and the unique representation of the goddess with a plant issuing from her womb is compared by Marshall with a terracotta relief of the early Gupta age from Bhita over which a goddess is shown with her legs in much the same position but with a lotus issuing from her neck instead from her womb. On a similar seal discovered from Harappa, M. S. Vats has observed that an oblong terracotta sealing on account of the scenes depicted on both sides, is quite interesting. To the right, on the obverse face, it shows a nude female figure placed upside down with legs drawn apart and with a plant issuing from her womb. Her arms are hanging downwards. In the centre is an inscription of six pictograms and at the extreme left is a pair of tigers standing face to face. On the obverse side to the left is a man armed with a shield in his left hand and a sickle-shaped weapon in his right, standing in a menacing attitude in front of a woman seated on the ground. In this case too the man is interpreted to be threatening to behead the woman whose hair is dishevelled and arms raised in alarm. To the right, is repeated the same inscription as on the obverse face[96] (Pls. 21, 30-31).

V. TREE GODDESS

The trees were adored in the Indian religious thought and according to the testimony of the Vedic literature, trees appeared in the universe at least three *yugas* earlier than the human birth on earth. These trees were adored in a variety of forms including the tree spirits and the tree goddesses. This aspect has been amply projected in the Harappan[97] seals. In this connection Marshall[98] has observed that the animistic conceptions which have distinguished the worship of trees throughout the historic period were common also in the Chalcolithic Age is clear from several seals and sealings. One of the most interesting aspect of the epiphany of the deity in the tree is portrayed in a half realistic and half conventional way. The tree itself at the right hand top corner of the seal is represented by two branches only springing from a circle on the ground and treated in a conventional fashion. (In other cases the tree appears conventionalised into the form of an arch surrounded by leaves in which the deity is framed, as if standing in a shrine). Between them appears the deity, a standing nude figure with long hair, *triśūla* like horns and armlets, recalling those of the three faced image of Śiva Paśupati. In front of the tree is the half kneeling figure of a suppliant, also with long hair, armlets and horns, but with the addition of a leaf-spray or a plume between the horns. Behind this suppliant is a composite animal, part bull-part goat (?) with human face of a type commonly met with at Mohenjodaro and Harappa. In the field below, in a line of seven small standing figures, with dresses reaching to the knees, with a long plait of hair, falling down the back,

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and a plume on the head. From its leaves the tree appears to be the *Pīpal* (*Ficus religiosa*), a tree which is still an object of universal worship throughout India. This also happens to be the tree of knowledge, under which the Buddha attained enlightenment. The nude deity appearing between the branches is very small and roughly portrayed, but the absence of any evidence of the male sex, coupled with the fact that the tree deities usually in India are female and that the ministrant figures on this seal also appear to be woman all point to its being a goddess. As to the human headed composite animal standing behind the suppliant, its meaning is not altogether clear. On some other seals where a similar scene is depicted, its place is taken by a goat or other horned animal; which sometimes stands behind the suppliant; sometimes between the suppliant and the deity, which might then be taken to be the sacrificial animal destined to be offered to the deity. But the animal in this particular case is surely not the sacrificial one, is clearly proved by this seal, where it is of mythical composite nature. Marshall takes this composite figure to be a protecting[99] local divinity of a minor nature accompanying the suppliant into the presence of the Tree Goddess. The plumes on the heads of the ministrants could be feathers, but more probably, they could be small branches such as in Kafiristan, were worn on the head by officiants at the worship of the *Chili* or Himalayan pencil cadar (*Funiperus macropodes*), when branches are also burnt in the honour of the tree spirit. Similar seals were unearthed from Mohenjodaro which stand testimony to the popularity of the cult of Tree goddess in ancient times (Figs. 20, 24, 47; Pls. 20, 21, 30, 36).

VI. LAJJĀ GAURĪ OR ADITI

The nude goddess called personified *yoni* type or *Baubo* and locally known (during the later times) as *Lajjā-Gaurī* who sits in the frog or Baubo style with legs held wide apart and raised (*uttānapāda*) exposing her *yoni* and who is often headless and has sometimes a lotus in place of the head is seen from the terracotta and stone plaques of the Deccan at Ter, Nevasa, Paithan, Bokardan, Konadapur, Yelleswaram and Nagarjunakonda; in Gujarat at Kanad, Kavi and Amrili and of the Yamuna[100] valley at Kausambi, Bhita and Jhusi from the Ist century A.D. (Fig. 25).

It may be recalled that the Indus valley finds have also produced a seal which has been discussed in the chapter on 'Śākambharī'. In this case a female has been depicted placed upside down with plant issuing from her womb. Besides many specimens of *yoni* have been reported from the site of Mohenjodaro. One such specimen has also been illustrated by Marshall (*MIC*, P1 XIII-7) which clearly depicts *yoni*. It would thus be evident from these specimens that this concept was quite well in vogue in the Harappan time and possibly travelled during the historical period with slight modifications.[101]

Reverting, however, to the evidence, on the subject of the historical period, it may be stated that the Nagarjunakonda stone plaque depicting the nude goddess is interesting as the

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torso is in the shape of a *ghaṭa* (pot), symbolic of the womb. It bears an inscription of the first century A.D. which testifies that the plaque was offered by a queen whose husband and sons were alive. Such plaques were offered in the fulfilment of a desire; particularly connected with the child-bearing. Sankalia believes that the nude goddess was initially introduced in Egypt, by Romans and was brought to India. But this view apparently does not appear to be convincing because of the evidence of Harappan sites. The following of the cult of this goddess, the genesis of which are too apparent in the Indus valley seals, continued till at least the eighth century A.D. as indicated by her images in temples in Alampur, Aihole and Mahakuṭeśvara in the Deccan.[102]

VII. EYE GODDESS

While considering the genesis of the eye-goddess, one has to refer back to the ancient civilizations of Iran and other countries of West-Asia. During the course of excavations at the west Asian site of Tell Brak, Mallowan encountered in the lower levels, with thousands of objects of white and black alabaster which he calls eye-idols. They consist of thin biscuit like body surmounted by a pair of eyes in human form once painted with paint. Such specimens were recovered from that site in huge numbers. Though some objects with such motifs have also been reported from Indus sites, but plaquettes of ivory shaped as human figures in geometric form with highly stylized features have been reported from Navodatoli, Nagada, Ujjain, Prabhas, Palan, Ropar, Sonkh and Mathura, which belong to the period between sixth to second century B.C. These figurines are decked with incised lines and circlets forming part of a systematic decorative scheme, betraying an established artistic tradition, although they have variations in shape. For instance, the specimen from Navadatoli has a pentagonal head, short and featureless arms and lower half of the body as a truncated triangle. The one from Nagada has a rectangular head with wavy ends, rhombic body and two angular ends below, attached to the projecting feet. The plaquitte from Ropar resembles a flat bottle in its general form. All the other figurines are fragmentory. They can be associated with primitive Mother Goddess on account of the presence of the triangular decorations on their body. Although[103] chronologically of the early historical period, they are typologically and stylistically somewhat similar to the eye goddess of west Asia. It is not unlikely that these ivory plaquettes had some ritualistic connection with a disease like the small pox (Pl. 22).

VIII. NURSING MOTHER

An other category of the terracotta figurines of the Mother Goddess is the one in which a female is depicted nursing her child. Several such specimens were recovered from Kulli sites besides Mohenjodaro and Harappa in which all of them hold the baby to the left breast; the right one is covered in some cases. In some cases the left hand is held to the mouth as if

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counselling silence, though, there is probably some other meaning to this gesture as a feeding baby would hardly be asleep. Some of the infants are hardly recognisable and are represented by a mere lump of clay. The position of the child appearing astride the mother's hip, is the usual mode of carrying a child in rural India at present times. The figures are more common in the lower, then in the upper levels. In all probability, these were the votive figurines placed in shrines either to obtain off-springs or as thanks offering for children. They are of two types viz; those of ordinary shape and those with hollow, squat and swollen bodies which may represent pregnancy. The later type of figurines, whether carrying an infant or not, is almost as frequently found as the former. (*F.E.M.*, Pls. LXXII-2; LXXV- 7,12, LXXVI-13) (Figs. 12, 17).

Some more female goddess, particularly relating to the forest have been included in the Chapter on Tree Worship in this work.

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3

Male Deities

I. ŚIVA OR PAŚUPATI

(i) The Genesis

Side by side with the Earth or Mother Goddess, the evidence of the presence of Śiva has also been found in the Indus Valley[1] as well as other Harappan sites with definite iconographical features in which he is projected single headed as well as having three (possibly four) heads, one being at the back and being invisible. He is found seated with legs folded at knees with feet facing each other and the thumbs raised upwards. He wears a horned head-dress with tree branches within the two horns. The arms are adorned with bangles. The lower limbs are bare and the raised *phalli* is exposed. These possibly are the earliest iconographical features of Śiva and he has been called as Paśuapati or the lord of beast, more so because he is found in the forest surroundings in the company of wild animals.

Though he has been termed by the modern scholars as Paśupati but the name by which he was addressed during those ancient times is still a mystery and his naming as Śive is of quite a later date. The name of Śiva is said to be connected with a Dravidian root meaning "red". Whether this surmise is correct or not, it is by no means unlikely that in Sanskrit language Śiva means auspicious, and this name was applied to the god by the Aryans, which bore a phonetic resemblance to his original name. On the other hand it may be that the epithet was merely adopted out of fear of the deity just as the Greeks spoke of the dreaded Erinyes as the *Eumenides* (the kindly) or the Romans of the daughter of Faunus as the Bona Dea. Be this, however, as it may, it will not be wrong to infer that the pre-Aryan deity, who so closely resembled Śiva in other fundamental respects, resembled him also as the god of destruction and terror, to be propitiated by human or other bloody sacrifices, and as the chief of mischievious spirits, demons and vampires. In these malignant aspects, Śiva corresponds closely with the non-Aryan Aiyanar, whose shrines are Ubiquitous in South India and whom some authorities difinitely identify with him. At the same time, he has many features in common with the Vedic Rudra, whose cult he subsequently absorbed, for though in the hymns of the

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Ṛgveda, Rudra appears as a more benificient deity; wise, bountiful and easily invoked, he is nonetheless formidable, and many of the hymns that refer to him are concerned with deprecating his wrath.[2]

In later Hindu mythology, in his developed form, Śiva is believed to have been developed out of the Vedic Rudra, the storm god. He is first mentioned in the *Yajurveda* as Mahādeva and in the *Mahābhārata* he is sometimes exalted above Viṣṇu. In one part, he is adored by Kṛṣṇa as well. He is the blue necked, three eyed, trident bearing lord of the creatures. The trident is lightning symbol which appears to have developed from the three wriggling flashes held in the left hands of hammer-gods like Tarka and Rammon. Śiva's third eye was on the forehead, and from it issued on occasion a flame of fire which could consume an enemy. Śiva's dwelling is on the Himalayan mount Kailāśa. He is called Girīśa, the lord of the hills and Candraśekhara (moon-crested), Bhuteśvara (lord of goblins and Śrī Kaṇṭha, (beautiful throated).

When he is depicted having five heads, he is regarded as the source of five sacred rivers flowing from the mountains. As the god with snow white face, he is conceived as Mahāyogī (the spirit of asceticism) and adored by the Brāhmaṇas performing penances. As a destroyer, he is armed with a discus, a sword, a bow and a club, but his most terrible weapon is the trident. Sometimes he is clad in the skin of an elephant and sometimes in that of a leopard, the tail dangling behind. A serpent coils over his head, ready to strike; another serpent appears from his shoulder anxious to strike an enemy. He is adorned with the ornaments of snakes.

The bull symbol, Nandī, the crescent moon on his forehead and the serpent girdle, indicates that Śiva is the god of fertility. A phallic symbol is associated with his worship. As Naṭīśa, the dancer, Śiva dances triumphantly on the body of the slain *asura*.

Though the Indus valley civilization or more commonly called the Harappan culture, has a deity as brought out above, who has been considered to be prototype of Śiva, but the name by which the same was adored is still a matter of conjecture. The form of Śiva is rarely found in the Vedic literature, though Rudra (Subsequently associated with Śiva) had been quite popular during those times. In the Vedic and post-Vedic literature Śiva was known in various forms, like Paśupati, Lord of the beasts, Yōgī, Mahāyogī or as the lord of mountains and forests. Some of these forms are available in the Harappan culture as well. There is a deity in the antiquities of Mohenjodaro, who is three faced, is seated over a low Indian throne in a typical attitude of *yoga* with legs bent double beneath him, heel to heel and toes turned downwards. His arms are outstretched, his hands, with thumbs to front, resting on his knees. From wrist to shoulders the arms are covered with eight smaller and three big size bangles. Over his head is a triangular pictoral or perhaps a series of necklaces or torques, like those on the later class of Goddess figurines from Baluchistan. Round the waist is a double band.

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The lower limbs are bare and the phallus is seemingly exposed. But it is possible that what appears to be phallus is in reality the end of a waist band. His head is crowned by a pair of horns meeting in a tall head-dress. To either side of the god are four animals, an elephant and a tiger on the proper right, a rhinoceros and a buffalo on his left. Beneath the throne are two deer with heads regardant and horns turned to the centre. At the top of the seal is an inscription of seven letters, the last of which, for lack of room at the right hand top corner has been placed between the elephant and the tiger. Thus, the attributes of the deity are peculiarly distinctive. In the first place, he is three faced (*trimukha*). In the historic period, it may be recalled that Śiva was portrayed as single headed besides three, four and five headed and always with three eyes. In this case, although only three faces are visible, it is possible that a fourth one is to be understood at the back, like several other images of Śiva in the historical period. Reliefs of the four faced Brahmā are usually projected in this fashion in the later sculptures. Besides in the *liṅgas*, the phallic emblems of Śiva, are usually fashioned with four faces, the idea being that the god looks at all the directions over the four quarters of the universe. It is this underlying conception here that four quarters are represented by the four animals to the right and left of the deity (Fig. 49, Pls. 30, 31).

Indeed the question presents itself whether the three faced deity on the aforesaid Mohenjodaro seal is not a syncrestic of three deities rolled into one. In this connection John Marshall[3] has observed as follows:-

"I do not mean by this that the philosophic idea of a triad associated with the doctrine of the absolute, had taken shape at this early period, but simply that the cult of this particular god–call him Śiva or by whatever name we like-had been amalgamated with their cults and the fact was signified by giving him three faces instead of one. In support of this suggestion it is to be recalled that the conception of the triad or the trinity is a very old one. In support of this suggestion it is to be recalled that the conception of the triad or the trinity is pretty old one in India, though it was possibly not until the historic period that it assumed a philosophic aspect and that it was equally old in Mesopotamia, where such triads as those of Sin, Shamash, of Ishtar or of Anu, Enlil and Ea were long antecedents to Aryans. In this three faced god from Mohenjodaro, therefore, it may be that the germ of the same idea is expressed. (The idea of a triad may also find expression in the three headed animal figured on a seal from Mohenjodaro).

It is more likely, however, that in the first instance, the god was provided with a plurality of faces in token of his all seeing nature; that such images afterwards suggested the *Trimūrtis* of Śiva, Brahmā and Viṣṇu; and the latter in their turn subsequently inspired such images (in the historical period)."

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In order to have a fairly wide idea of the type of evidence concerning that early form of Śiva, it would be quite appropriate to discuss some of the seals over which he is found represented. The account that follows throws enough of light on the subject.

Seal 222 from Mohenjodaro[4] depicts a figure, probably of a deity, seated in what may be a *yogic* posture with the heels pressed together on a low dais, whose legs represent those of a bull. The arms are outstretched on either side, but it is possible that the hands are intended to rest on the knees and that the seal cutter merely raised them slightly to obviate any confusion of the arms with the legs. On each arm, there is a large number of bracelets. The head-dress is a twig with leaves like those of *Pipal*. The horns, if indeed, they are horns, are definitely separate from the head; they are moreover represented as fastened to the base of the twig. The figure has three faces, one in front and two in profile (Pl. 31).

On seal 235[5], there is a somewhat similar figure. The stool is omitted however, and the figure is apparently seated over the ground. The head-dress consists of two horn - like objects between which there appears to be a spike of flowers. A pig tail hangs down on one side of the head which has one face only, in profile facing to the right. The seal is badly damaged but shows clearly that the figure was surrounded by pictographs arranged in somewhat haphazard manner,

Seal 420[6] is well preserved and has been described by John Marshall, identifying it to be of Śiva:-

"A comparison of these seals would reveal many points in common. Apart from the ornaments they wear, the figures are nude, save for a cincture worn round the waist and apparently also passed between the legs, a garment very similar to *Langoṭ* worn by ascetics in the present day India. On seal 222. the figure has only one face but on Nos. 235 and 420, it is three. On two of the seals (No.222 and 420), the god is seated over a low stool, whose support, in one case is shaped like the legs of a bull and in the other somewhat like an hour glass. On No.222 and 235, the head dresses are very similar, but surrounded by a plant motif with three branches in the one case and only a single branch in the other. The longer figure on seal 420 lacks the spray of foliage, but has instead the fan shaped ornament commonly associated with the pottery female figurines."

All these figures wear a large number of bangles from the armpits to the wrists and on seal 420, there is also a triangular ornament or else a number of strings of beads. It is difficult to determine how the hair was worn, except that on seal 235, it apparently hangs in the form of a long rope down on the side of the head. Had this seal not been broken accidently, it is possible that it would have been seen to terminate with a bow as on pig tail of the figure on another seal. Though all the three of these figures appear to be male deities, the pigtail of No. 235 is also worn by the tree spirit and the worshipper and the seven ministrants on seal 430

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all of which figurines appear to be female, possibly both male and female deities were represented with pigtails on occasions. Therefore, the figure of seal 235 cannot possibly be a female deity.

On all the three seals, there are pictographic signs which could not be deciphered with satisfaction. On seal No. 420, there are six beasts and the figure of a man around the god; on the left of the impression, an elephant and a tiger with a man between, on the right a rhinoceros and a buffalo, and below the dais on which the god is seated there are antilopes. The deity has been identified by John Marshall as Paśupati or the lord of Beasts.

It may be recalled here that in the Vedic literature there is a god called Vanaspati or the lord of the forest and many hymns are devoted to him. This god primarily denotes the trees or the forest diety. (Av. IX. 3.11 or 17); *Taittirīya Samhitā* (VI.2.8.4). Since the deity from Mohenjodaro is found seated in the environment of the forest and even wears twigs over the head-dress, it would not be inappropriate to identify him with Vanaspati of the Vedic description; but in that case the position of the phallus can not be explained. However, after detailed consideration some salient features of the personality of the god emerge, which lead us to believe him to be Śiva, rather than Vanaspati; some of which are detailed in the account that follows:-

(a) Mahāyogī

The prominent feature of this pre-Aryan god that links him with the historic Śiva is this peculiar yogic-like posture, with the feet drawn up beneath him, toes turned downwards and hands extended above the knees. Śiva is pre-eminently the prince of *yogīs*-the typical ascetic and self mortifier; whence his name *Mahātapah* or *Mahāyogī*. Primarily, the purpose of *yoga* was the attainment of union (*yoga*) with the god by mental discipline and concentration; but it was also the means of acquiring miraculous powers, and hence in the course of time, the *yogī* came to be regarded as a magician, miracle-monger or the one possessing supernatural powers. There is a school of thought which believes that like Śaivism, itself, *yoga* had its origin among the pre-Aryan population, and this explains, why it was not until the Epic period that it came to play an important role in the Indo-Aryan religion. Besides the head of a male statue was discovered from Mohenjodaro in which its eyes stood concentrated on the tip of the nose which was interprepeted to portray the attitude of *yoga*. It could be the image of a priest or a king-priest, since it was without horns which could naturally be expected if it were a figure of the deity himself. That it possessed a religious or quasi-religious character is suggested by the distinctive trefoil patterning of its robes. A deity in the same yogic attitude is also depicted on a small faience sealing from Mohenjodaro but in this case, there is a kneeling Nāga to either side of him with hands uplifted in prayers. Whether this deity is three faced or not, the sealing is too defaced to show, but it is noteworthy that on another seal found

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from Mohenjodaro, a deity is portrayed in the same posture with a single face only. It has already been remarked that Śiva could be represented in art with one, three, four or more faces, but his pre-historic prototype had a variable number of faces obviously cannot be taken for granted. It may be that the god on all the three seals is one and the same, but it may also be that the *yoga* attitude was transferred to other deities as well.[7]

No doubt in the Indus culture, we find not only the traces of the adoration of Śiva in human form, but indeed his iconographical features had considerably developed as would be evident from the following account:-

(b) Lord of the Beasts

In the Vedic literature there is a deity called Aranyāṇī, or the one who controls the forests. Naturally the forests, besides the vegetation also have the wild life. The said deity therefore could also be taken to be the lord of beasts in the forest. Śiva's figure which has been represented over the seals from Mohenjodaro, could also be interpreted to be the lord of beasts or Paśupati. It is seemingly in reference to this aspect of his nature that the four animals—the elephant, tiger, rhinoceros and buffalo are grouped around him. In the historic times the title Paśupati, meant as the "lord of cattle, and the analogy of *Paśu* was applied to human herds of which Śiva was the herdsman. It may be recalled here that soul also called as *paśu*, belongs to the Lord as a master. It is conceived of a being bound by the master as a beast (*paśu*) is bound by a fetter. But in the Vedic hymns *paśu* signifies a beast of the jungle and it may reasonably be inferred, therefore, that at the time, the deity was regarded as the master of wild no less than of the tame animals. Rudra, the Vedic god, whose cult was amalgamated and identified with that of Śiva, also bore the title of Paśupati and this may conceivably have been one of the reasons for identifying him as Śiva. An instructive parallel to this aspect of the deity is furnished by the nameless god and goddess of Minoan Crete, who are frequently figured on the monuments in company with the lions, leopards, and have come to be known as the master and mistress of animals. The Anatolian Cybelė too, who is analogous to the Great Mother (Mahādevī) the consort of Śiva was similarly supported by lions.[8]

(c) Divine Hunter

Two more seals of Śiva were found in the course of excavations from Harappa. The deity is always nude save for a cincture round the waist. He has a horned head-dress. In one seal, the deity is three faced and seated on a low dais, while the second has one face in profile. Both have a sprig of flowers or leaves raising from the head between the horns. This sprig suggests that the deity so ornamented is a vegetation or a fertility god. A horned archer dressed in the costumes of leaves displays the divine hunter aspect of Śiva.

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It thus appears that Śiva was one of the principal deities of the people together with Mother Goddess. His worship was not mere iconic, but phallic as well, as would appear from the presence of a large number of conical and cylindrical stones. The conical and cylindrical stones possibly project fertility and are connected with the cult of Śiva as *Lingas*. Many scholars find a contemptuous reference in the Ṛgveda to phallus worship and regard it as a veiled allusion to the religious customs of the pre-Aryan people of the Indus valley, but it has been suggested by others that the passage in question simply alludes to sensuous or lustful person.

(d) Horns of Divinity (a prototype of the trident)

Another attribute that helps to connect this god from Mohenjodaro, as Śiva, (though it does not amount to actual evidence of identity) is the pair of horns crowning the head. Similar horns appear on several figures from Mohenjodaro[9] besides the terracotta masks. In these cases there can be little doubt that horns have a special sacred significance. They can in some cases be taken as the emblem of the deity. In other cases they seem to have been transferred to the priest or possibly to the votary. Precisely, the same practice obtained at this period in Sumer or Babylonia, where horns were commonly used to denote the deity, but were also worn by kings or priests, presumably because they were regarded as incarnations or the representatives[10] of the horned gods. Such horns, therefore, must not be regarded as the attribute of any particular deity or used as an argument for associating one deity with another. On the other hand, this particular pre-Aryan emblem of divinity, although not generally adopted, by the Vedic Aryans, did not entirely die out. In later days it took the form of a trident and in that guise it continued to be the special attribute of Śiva, though it was subsequently usurped by the other sects as well; notably the Buddhist, with whom, it stood for the Trinity of the three jewels (*triratna*). The emblem, therefore, provides another link in the chain which connects Śiva with the pre-Aryan religion and to this extent supports his identification with the deity of the seal from Mohenjodaro.

(e) Two deer

Two deer or Ibexes beneath the god are shown seated in seals from Mohenjodaro. The deer in a like position are portrayed on many medieval images of Śiva, especially, when he appears in the form of Dakṣināmūrti or Yogadakṣināmūrti. Besides a deer is held in one of his hands depicts a frequent attribute of the god in his other manifestations. The two deer beneath the throne, recall of course, those familiar beneath the Buddha's throne in the *Dharma Cakra* postures, where they symbolise the deerpark in which the first sermon was preached by the Buddha. This motif is quite commonly found in the early Buddhist India. It is therefore quite evident that the motif was long anterior to Buddhism, and it seems quite possible that

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the Buddhists themselves adopted it as they adopted so much else from the popular religion of the day as being peculiarly associated with the *yogī* or *a teacher type already long established by Śaivites.*[11]

(f) Śiva standing besides the bull

M.S. Vats has reported the discovery of an oblong terracotta[12] sealing with legendary scenes on both sides depicting probably from left to right the end of the reverse. First on the obverse, is a familiar scene of a man attacking a tiger from a *macan* created on an *acacia* tree, then a god (?) is "seated on a low Indian throne in a typical attitude of *yoga,* with legs bent double beneath him, heal to heal and tows turned down wards. His arms are outstretched, his hands, (presumably) with thumbs to front resting on knees. (Similar specimens have been found from Mohenjodaro). From knee to the shoulder the arms are covered with bangles." From behind his head-dress there is a long tassel like appendage to right, which perhaps is faintly seen on the standing figure on the reverse also. Of the animals to his right, the one in the enclosure has a short, bushy tail and bovine legs, and its head is turned backwards. It may be a goat. Below the projection may be a hare or a kid, and above it an animal with long body and short legs of which the figure is altogether blurred. From left to right, on the reverse, is a humpless bull standing with a trident-headed post with his head bent down a little, then a standing figure, possibly a god, in front of the two storeyed structure followed by three pictograms at the right end; is of unusual interest. It looks like a combined side elevation and perspective of a double storeyed room preceded by a porch-both of open work in front; but seemingly the two storeyed room is closed by lattice work on the rear side and crowned at the corners by somewhat conical finials. It is not clear what the bifurcated object hanging down from a projection in front of the terrace is intended to represent. Below this is seen a donical object over the porch. The structure is probably of a sacred character and in view of the trident post and bull-which are peculiarly associated with Śiva, whose prototype has been found at Mohenjodaro; the possibility of the standing figure being ultimately identified as another form of the same god may not be altogether ruled out.

J.N. Banerjea[13] describes the above scene, interpreting it to be a mythological scene, mainting the presence of the form of Śiva, as under:-

> "An oblong terracotta sealing which contains legendary scenes on both its faces has the order of depiction on each face probably running from left to right. It is so very interesting for the purpose of our present study that I cannot but fully note his description of the devices on both sides. The obverse shows first of all a man attacking a tiger from a *machan* (scaffolding) erected on an *acacia* tree. The deity is next shown seated on a low Indian throne in the well known yogic posture; from behind his headdress there is a long tassel like appendage to right

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> which reminds us of a similar object on the head of a similar figure on some Mohenjodaro seal described by Mackay (cf. No. 222 and 235...) of the animals to the right, the one in the enclosure may be a god, that below the projection, a hare or a kid, and that above it, an indistinct animal with a long body."

The different aspects of the projections have been interpreted by him as follows:[14]

> "Scenes of what appears to be a tiger hunt is comparatively familiar in Harappa and Mohenjodaro. Marshall suggests that such seals many have been used as protective amulets against tigers or jungle animals. (*M.I. C.*Vol. I, p. 71). The explanation holds good as regard the obverse device, but the reverse one partially reminds me of the reverse device of some Ujjaini coins ....The animals are no doubt absent, but here too is some sort of a structure with conical projections (?), as well as the trident headed post, which, however, is held by the right hand of the standing figure on the right side. I have suggested the possibility of the figure representing the votary; it may as well be the cult deity in his human form. As regard the domical object over the porch on Harappa seal it might be the same as realistic phallus, which appears on the obverse of the same types of coins....It may be noted that the figure standing by the humpless bull on the Harappan seal seems to hold a long staff in his left hand and a water vessel like object in his right one, just reminiscent of similar figures on certain punch-marked coins, which I have tentatively identified as Śiva... "

H. D. Sankalia commenting on the presence of Śiva in Harappa[15] in one form or the other has observed as follows:-

> "There is nothing specific to tell as about Harappa religion except that the so called fire altars and *kuṇḍas* and an oblong terracotta cake, incised on both sides with a figure which reminds once again of the figure in god in Hissar-III, and a painting on a pot on Kot Diji from the Junction layers. The incised figure seems to be a bull headed figure (god) with large incurved horns. To some extent we are familiar with a horned headed deity from the famous Paśupati like seal from Mohenjodaro. But there, the horns are not quite clear, and as such some scholars doubt this identification. But in the Kalibangan figure there is no doubt. And this, as shown here can be derived from an old mountain goat, a head in gold from Hissar in Iran through the painting of a bull's head on a pot at Kot Diji in Sindh and also at Gumla and Burzhom " (Fig. 48 a-g).

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II. TWO HEADED DEITY

Paśupati (or Śiva) has been found represented in the Mohenjodaro seals, with a single face as well as with three faces. But there is another terracotta pottery piece in which a two faced god has been projected. Mackay has described the same as under:-

> "Pottery, with traces of red applied over a thick pinkish slip, 2.92 m. height. Two pottery faces apparently made in the same mould were joined togerther back to back to make this Janus-like head, the material squeezed up between them serving to represent a head-dress. This double head appears to have been attached to a single body as the base of the joined necks shows a definitely single fracture. The slanting eyes seem to have been touched with a graver. This is perhaps a representation of a double faced deity which is new to us at Mohenjodaro and leaves room for speculation." (*F.E.M.*, p. 280).

He further comments on the issue, supposing it to be a form of a deity thus:-

"In a brief discussion of *biforns* or two faced figures, Ward, quoting Menant states that on Sumerian seals they are merely a conventional devise, to show that respect or attention is being paid to the deity on the one hand and on the other to a personage brought before the god. He points out that this two faced figure also occurs on Hittite seals. It can hardly be suggested that the two faced figure from Mohenjodaro embodied the same idea. This two-faced figure in the round can only be that of a deity. Possibly the bifrons figures on the Hittite and Sumerian seals were also deities, or at all events precisely representations of a deity-a supposition which is borne out by one of these figures being horned. It seems likely that these two-faced figurines from Sumer and India were allied in some way. At all events, it is as well to bear in mind that one god, at least, in Indian mythology is represented with three four and sometimes with five heads and that one of the seals bears a three-faced figure, which Sir John Marshall identifies with Śiva. Representations of two-faced gods are, I understand, unknown in historic India." (*Ibid.*, p.654, P1. LXXVI-8).

Recalling here that the Agamas and Tantras according to Gopinatha[16] Rao provide for two faces of Śiva in case a central shrine of Śiva has two door-ways at the front and the back, there should be two faces carved on the front and the back of the *liṅga*. We already have the evidence of worship of *liṅga* in the Harappan sites. It will therefore, not be surprising if this particular object too represents Śiva in the form of *Liṅga*.

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III. LIṄGA WORSHIP

From the time immemorial the deities in India were adored in iconic as well as aniconic forms. A question of manifest importance is presented by a seal from Mohenjodaro in which the image portrayed on it represents an actual cult idol or merely the anthropomorphic form of the god, as apprehended in popular imagination. Because when a deity is imaged in human shape, it does not necessarily follow that he is worshipped in that shape. Manifold instances could be quoted of the gods and goddesses being worshipped in baetylic, but are also conceived in anthropomorphic form. Even in modern India many deities like Śiva and Viṣṇu are pictured and commonly worshipped in quasi-human shape, but not commoly still they are represented for cult purposes, by aniconic forms, the one by the *liṅga*, the mystic phallic symbol of creation and the other by Śāligrāma. In seeking, therefore, to interpret these monuments of primitive and unknown religion, one should be careful not to conceive cult idols with what may have been merely imaginative representations of deities. In this particular case, however, it is evident that the highly conventionalised type of image, its stylized details and the fact that the kindered image portrayed on the faience sealing referred to above, is being worshipped by the Nāgas which clearely point to its being a cult idols. It could therefore, be assumed that the people of Mohenjodaro had naturally reached the stage of anthropomorphising their deities but they worshipped them in that form as well as in aniconic form.

Śivaliṅgas

Indus-Valley civilisation has produced a number of *yoni*s and *liṅga* which became so characteristic of the modern Śaivism. In India the reverence paid to stone, is, as universal as it is ancient. Primarily stones were worshipped because of their peculiar appearance or some weird or uncanny features, which distinguished them from other stones; then, in the animistic stage, they came to be regarded as the symbols of a spirit; and eventually with the development of iconism, they took shape as idols. Even today, the worship of aniconic stones both nautral and man made, play an important role. They serve as watchman of the cross roads; they guard the villages and fields from evil spirits; they ensure good crops and even cure diseases among man and cattle; in birth and marriage rites they have a specific place; and they provide a resting place for the spirit of the departed ones. In the shape of Śāligrāma they are the embodiment of Viṣṇu; in the shape of *liṅga* and *yoni* of Śiva and Mahādevī or of the creative principles of life. Frequently they are in natural shape (*Svayambhu*) untouched by hand and; at other times they are crudely shaped and at others finely chiselled and highly conventionalised; but whether worked or unworked they are reverenced either for some inherent virtue of their own or because they are permeated with the spirit of a deity. The antiquity of the worship and magical use of the sex symbols can be traced to the period of pre-Harappa and Harappa cultures if cultic significance can be attributed to conical objects

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and ringstones of these cultures. Phallic representations have been reported from Mughal Ghundai and Periano Ghundai (Baluchistan). A large number of phalli and ring stones in varying sizes have been found from Mohenjodaro and Harappa and other similar sites. Some of the miniature phalli could have been amulets for magico-protective use as suggested by Marshall, who refers to the find of a *liṅga* in a storage jar of Harappa and relates it to cults of rejuvenation and fertility. There are some large realistically modelled phallic stones with smoothened top portion which according to Marshall seem to have been used for worship. Alongwith this material for probable phallic worship, there is also the projection of ithyphallicism on Mohenjodaro seal of horned deity, though what looks like an ithiphallic feature may be actually part of waist band as believed by some scholars. *Liṅga*-like clay objects have also been reported from Harappa levels of Surkotada and from later Chalcolithic site like Mehi. However the small conical objects found at Lothal have been interpreted as gamesmen.

(i) Liṅgas in Indus Valley and Baluchistan

At Mohenjodaro and Harappa[17] there are three classes of aniconic objects, usually of stone, but occasionally of other material as well. The first category comprises of phalli realistically medelled and prove conclusively that *liṅga* worship in India, had pre-Aryan origin; thus disposing once and for all the fantastic theory of its Greek origin. Further evidence on the same point is furnished by two realistic specimens of the same kind—one a *liṅga* and the other a *yoni*[18] which were discovered from the Chalcolithic sites in Northern Baluchistan, the former from Mughal Ghundai and the latter from Periano Ghundai.[19] The other objects in this class are more conventionalised in shape and their character, therefore is not so obvious. They vary in size from half an inch or a foot or so in height and are generally made of limestone or albastar, but the miniature ones are also made of shall, faience and paste, the last mentioned sometimes being coloured to resemble carnelian. These miniature specimens might have served as gamesmen, but the larger specimens are much too heavy for the purpose and their shape does not suit them for use as weight; nor is there any other utilitarian purpose that can be suggested for them. Indeed the only explanation applicable to them all is that they were the sacred objects of some sort, the larger ones serving as the aniconic specimens for cult purposes, the smaller ones as amulets to be carried on the person, just as miniature *liṅgas* are commonly carried by Śaivites today. These objects were, in fact, *liṅgās* seems highly probable from their shape inspite of its conventionality, inevitably calls to mind the *liṅga* from Mughul Ghundai.[20] (Pls. 2, 32).

In the medieval and modern India, it is only very rarely that *liṅgas* at all take the naturalistic form. Almost all of them are so conventionalised that most of the people would find it difficult in recognising their phallic character.[21] As a matter of fact the resemblance between the stone

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objects under discussion and the Mughal Ghundai *Liṅga* is closer than at first sight appears. Some of the former differ from their fellows in that they consist of the upper part only and are provided with small holes, as if they had been attached to a base of some sort. The same characteristic is observed in the *liṅga* from Mughual Ghundai but in this case, the material of which it is composed of is terracotta instead of stone and the base or whatever it was to which it was attached was made in one piece with it and has been broken off at the juncture. On the analogy of the *Śiva-liṅga*, this base may be assumed to have been a *yoni*; and it is reasonable inference that the *yoni* bases were also affixed to the stone pieces the bases of which took the form of the ring stones.[22]

An instructive parallel of the *liṅga* stones of naturalistic pattern could be traced in the phallic like columns at Dhimapur and Kasomari Pathen in Assam, which are locally known as the chessmen pillars. (But these columns are of considerably late period). They are believed to be the memorial stones erected in memory of the local heroes and have been ascribed by scholars as belonging to the non-Aryan people. These columns were the *liṅgas* could be inferred by the fact that in the non-Aryan districts of the South there was a custom prevailing till recent times, of erecting *liṅgas* on the graves of the local heroes.[23]

Vats[24] has reported the discovery of a *liṅga* from Harappa as follows:-

"Tiny steatite liṅgam holed at the bottom and painted red to simulate carnelian. It is decorated with six oblique white bands meeting at the top and raising from the bends of a ring undulating upwards only. It is possible that this undulating band was intended to represent a ring stone or *yoni* round the baetylic phallus.

(ii) Diamabad[25]

Two stone *Śivaliṅgas* were discovered from the excavations at Diamabad. The excavator has described the find as follows:-

"The occurrence of this phallus-shaped object in the inside of the fire-pit or the fire altar filled with ash, a few potsherds and a small stone, indicate that it was an object of veneration. Due to its contact with smokey fire and ash in fire-pit a patch of the crust of black shoot is adhered to its surface. The object is made of agate, is 3.4 cm long. The sculptor has achieved a grand success in fashioning smooth realistic fleshy parts of an erect phallus in this small object. It is divisible into two parts. (i) the pedestal and (ii) the phallus. The pedestal is broken, leaving only little traces of it. The traces indicate that it was meant for fixing in a circular hollow of some object which served as a *pīṭha*, so that the phallus stood erect. The phallus or rather ithyphallus is bulbous at the base with 1.6 cm maximum diameter. The most realistic modelling, however, is of the penis; 1.3 cm long and equally thick, in which not only the details of the concave base and the side projections have been carved out but also the appex

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has been quite prominently depicted. It should be mentioned that nowhere else in the Indian sub-continent so naturalistic a representation of ithyphallus has been hitherto recorded in so early a period. Besides representing the earliest evidence of sculptural art in the Deccan, it also suggested that the Savaldans were phallus worshippers. It may be recalled that the Harappans were also the worshippers of the phallus. Still artistically the ithyphallus of their contemporaries in the Deccan, the Savaldans is far superior and more realistic than the simple phalli of the Harappans, notwithstanding the fact that the sculptural art of the latter was no doubt of the high artistic order. The object being as image of a realistic erect penis symbolising generative power in nature or the fecundating principle, it is possible to understand the religious ideas derived from the circular shape of the pedestal meant to be fixed into the circular hollow of the *pīṭha*. In these, thus appeared to lie, the belief in the principle of creativity and the desire for abundance of off-springs as well as the agricultural produce, multiplication and the saving of the live-stock and fulfilment of the worldly needs."

The site of Diamabad has also been credited with the discovery of a stone head of Śiva.[26] The photograph of the said object brought out in the Diamabad Report of the Archaeological Survey of India is too abstract and nothing definite could be made out of it. Still, the description of the object provided by the excavator is reproduced as under:-

"The sculpture head of besalt of the Malwa[27] Phase was recovered from trench x'3 in Sector-II. It was not possible to associate its association. The head is carved on trifaceted stone, 17.3 cm. high, of vesicular purple basalt, with a flattish base, gradually tappering towards the rounded top. Two of its faces have been utilized to carve the facial features, the third, which serves the back side of the head, and the base, being left unworked. The rolled nature of the stone suggests that it was collected from the bed of the river Prawara. The stone being of vasicular variety of trap is marked with natural pits all over.

"An ingenuity of the sculptor is suggested by the selection of the naturally shaped appropriate stone to convert it into a sculpture without labouring to dress for achieving the desired shape. Two of the three facets of the stone meet each other in the broad rounded ridge. It was used to depict the central elevation of the face, the nose and the mouth. On either side of this prominence, on the upper side is engraved a gogle-eye, that on the right side being damaged due to the flaking of the stone. The nose has been depicted by a sub-triangular carving between the eyes and the nostrils on its either side by a pit at its bottom. Immediately from the bottom of the nose, and between the nostrils, run the moustaches, but on the left being a little curved. The slight elevation below the moustaches, representing the mouth and the chin, gradually recedes towards the base of the stone which is roughly triangular in plan and 13.7 x12.3 cm in size. The lines have been engraved to show the facial feature, the eyes,

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the nose and the moustaches-are quite broad varying in breadth from 4 to 9 mm and in depth three to five mm."

"An interesting aspect of the sculpture head is that it is oval in outline. It is quite well known that rolled oval shaped pebbles are worshipped as Śiva. In the present case, the stone selected for engraving the facial features is rolled and seems to have been collected from the river bed. It should be noted that almost similar type of oval shaped stones with facial features, excluding the moustaches, carved in relief, called *Ekamukha liṅga* and ascribed to the fourth century A.D. have been reported from central India. The scupltue head from Diamabad could likewise be described as *Ekamukha liṅga.*

Besides the above sites, definite evidence of phallic symbol can be seen on the Ujjain coins of about 2nd century BC. They bear the realistic representation of a *liṅga* within a railing placed between two trees. The 1.5 m high stone *liṅga* from Gudimallam of about the Ist century B.C. has the realistic representation of phallus and an image of Śiva has been carved on the front side. Mukhaliṅgas having one or more faces of Siva carved on the phallus are seen at mumerous sites from the second century AD. The early realistic *liṅgas* gradually gave place to conventionalised *liṅga* from about the fourth century A.D.

Though the presence of *liṅga* the symbolic form of Śiva, could be traced in the pre-Harappan and Harappan culture in the sub-continent, but the cult gained more and more popularity in the subsequent times and his sanctity travelling through the historical times has reached even the modern times. His worship in the icononic as well symbolical forms is in vogue in modern times right from Kashmir to Kanya Kumari and from the east to the west.

IV. YAMA

Yama, is another male god found depicted over the pottery of Harappa. Though his representations are not as widespread as those of the other deities, but his presence in some form or the other points out to the beliefs of the Harappan people, in so far as their dead ancestors are concerned. These beliefs in a way resemble the Vedic beliefs. There is an elaborate painting over a burial jar, found from Harappa, which refers to Yama and his hounds M.S. Vats[28] has described the same as follows:-

"That this elaborate painting, occurring on a burial pot is meant to portray what was believed to happen to the dead person, there can hardly be any doubt. It appears that the hound in the left hand scene, may be like two hounds of Yama. (Rv. X. 14.10-12), like the hounds of Hades and that the right hand scene where the cattle are now decked with trident crests, depicts them in the "Abode of Bliss", after they have passed through the intermediate Hades. The goat between the two scenes was also a sort of path finder and a deified inter

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mediary, an inference which, may be drawn both from its large size and the crests on its horns.

In discussing early Indo-Aryan customs regarding the Dead and Disposal of the Dead, Professor Hillbrandt says, "The living are bound to prepare the way for the dead in the other world, to provide them with food for their great journey into Yama's realm and to supply them with means for crossing the rivers. These ends are served by *Utkrānti* or *Vaitarṇī* cow, which in some cases has been presented to the Brāhmaṇs before his death by the deceased himself or his son. The same was originally, no doubt, the purpose of the *Anustaraṇī* cow, which is led along in the funeral train besides the food for Yama's dogs. The streams which have to be crossed are probably indicated by the piece of reed which is introduced into the wall of the tomb, which is meant to serve as a boat."

"In the light of this passage, I suggest that the bulls anticipated the sacred Aryan cows and that the left hand one, which is without the entrails is perhaps to be identified with the prototype of *Anuśtaraṇi* and the right hand one as the *vaitarṇī* cow, some of the oldest references on the subject are given hereunder:-

(i) *Ṛgveda,* X.16.7.

(ii) *Āśvalāyana Gṛhyasūtra,* IV.3.

(iii) *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa,* III.3.8.

(iv) *Kātyāyana Śrauta Sūtra,* XXV.7.30.

(v) *Rāmāyana,* IV.44.65.

(vi) *Mahābhārata,* II.373 and III 60.54 and 8148.

(vii) *Harivaṁśa Purāna,* 7736 and 9511.

The hound, is remarked as the Yama's dog. In connection with the outlined hind quarters of the goat, it is interesting to point out that in a verse of the *Ṛgveda* (X.16) a funeral hymn is addressed to Agni (Fire), as the deity at the time of cremating the dead body.

M.S. Vats in his description has tried to identify the painting on the pottery jar from Harappa to portray the travel of the dead to the abode of Yama, which evidently means that the deity was adored by the Indus people in one form or the other, though it may not be possible to fully contribute to the aforesaid interpretation, in view of the latest research in the Vedic and post-Vedic texts (Pl. 34).

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4

The Composite Forms

The excavations at the Harappan sites have brought to light several specimens of composite forms, both human and animals besides the composite animals. Most of the evidence is furnished by engravings on seals and sealings, but they are supplemented by small terracotta, faience and stone figurines and a few stone idols of larger size. The animals represented fall into three distinct categories viz., (i) those of definitely mythical character, (ii) those whose mythical character is questionable, and (iii) those belonging to natural species. While the animals falling under item No. (iii) above worshipped by the Indus people will be discussed separately, the discussion here will be restricted to the composite forms, so abundantly available in the artefacts of Harappa and Mohenjodaro in respect of the first two categories.

The composite forms of the first two categories can be further divided as follows:-

I. HUMAN AND ANIMAL FORMS

(i) Half human and half serpent

Marshall refers to two seals found at Mohenjodaro which contain the figure of a god seated in *yoga* posture on whose either side kneels a half-human half-snake form of a *nāga* with hands uplifted in prayers.[1] It is not quite clear, however, from these two seal devices whether the snake-body is attached to the back of the kneeling human votaries of the god; as in the early Kuṣāṇa and subsequent representations of the *nāgas* at Mathura and other sites, the whole serpent body and sometimes only its one or many hoods (five or seven) are invariably attached behind the human body (the later mode is also adopted in the Sunga art of Central India). But on these seals the technique of showing the *nāgas* which might have been somewhat similar to the one followed by the Bharhut artist in his presentation of the Elāpātra Nagraja's visit to the Buddha; at first Elāpātra is shown in his serpent form, then he is given the human shape with snake hoods attached behind the head. On these Indus valley seals, the snakes appear on the far sides while the kneeling human[2] figurines are without any snake hood, on the rear sides of the god.

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Marshall[3] has, however, described the same saying that in the faience sealings the cobra appears to be distinct from the kneeling suppliant in front of it, but the details are blurred and it may be that the tail of the cobra is intended to be looped round and joined on to the feet of the suppliant, as it is in the proto-Elamite monuments. However this may be, it seems probable that the suppliant in this case is meant to be a *nāga*. The belief in the *nāgas* is unknown to the Vedic people but is prominent in the later Indian literature from the time of Sūtras onwards, and the motif of *nāgas* doing homage to a deity is quite famous in Indian art.

(ii) Half human-half Bull

In the category of therianthrophic[4] deities or demons, could be included the semi-human, semi-bovine creatures attacking a horned tiger on seal No. 317. The presence of this particular form of creature at Mohenjodaro is of more than usual interest, because of the undeniable resemblance it bears to the Sumerian Eabani or Enkidu, the half man-half bull monster, whom the goddess Aruru created to combat Gilgamesh, but who afterwards became his ally and with him she fought against the wild beasts. In view of this close resemblance, it may be stated that the representations of Gilgamesh and Eabani fighting wild beasts are among the earliest motifs of Mesopotamian glyptic art going back—according to Ward—to the beginning of the fourth millennium B.C. This does not of course prove the conception of a hero or a god with half-human, half-bull form and that the bison's horns originated in Mesopotamia. The motif is Indian in origin in all probability.

(iii) Half woman-half tiger (or Durgā?)

The extra-ordinary figure shown in seal No. 247 from Mohenjodaro, is a combination of a woman with a tiger's body, but not centaur like, as the forelegs are certainly human. On the head there are two spiral horns extended laterally which might equally well be those of a goat or a sheep, though in view of the animal on seal 430 they are probably the former. Rising from between them in a similar spike of flowers of leaves like the one on seal No. 235. As on that seal as well a long pigtail is worn; it is apparently tied at the end with a bow. The pig-tail, as also on seal 430, projects from the head in such a way as to suggest that it was stiffened, but possibly it was so represented solely to avoid any confusion with other parts of the figure, a technique quite common in Indus seals. The human portion of the figure is nude save for a short skirt longer behind than in front and it wears armlets and bracelets.[5](Pl. 37).

This seal under discussion (347) has certain common[6] features as compared to seal 235. Both the figures appear to be of the same sex and both have horned head-dress with a spike of leaves standing between the horns. There is a considerable difference, however, in the shapes of the horns on the two seals, No. 235 and another, they may be those of a buffalo—the turned-in tips suggest this, as well as the fact that they are grooved—whereas on seal 347

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they are obviously the horns of a goat. The pigtail so prominently shown on both these seals may have been a distinguishing mark of deity. The close association of this figure with a tiger suggests that it was not of a benign nature. On the other hand, the horns imply a connection with an animal very opposite in nature to the tiger.

As Śiva in his form of Paśupati has been identified on one of the seals, it would perhaps not be unreasonable to connect the figure on seal 347 with Durgā, his consort, whose vehicle is tiger. It depends entirely on the fact as to whether the human part of this composite figure is a male or a female; should it be a male it should be remembered that Śiva himself is represented sometimes seated on a tiger's skin.

II. ANIMALS WITH HUMAN HEADS

(i) Human faced elephant (?)

Four seals, Nos. 411, 450, 521 and 636, from lower levels[7] of Mohenjodaro have the curious human faced, composite animal carved upon them. The forelegs are those of an ox-like animal, and the striped hind-quarters and the feet resemble those of a tiger. There are short curved horns and the human face shown in profile (especially clearly in No. 450), apparently has an elephant's trunk hanging from the chin and a pair of tusks. In this figure, there seems a fusion of no less than three or possibly four animals with the human form, which perhaps represents a deity that was worshipped at Mohenjodaro. This composite creature was perhaps also portrayed in statue form as the representation of it on seals shows it to be wearing garlands with which it is likely that its images were adorned (Pls. 38 a-c).

That this figure has an elephant's trunk seems to be certain, despite the ragged look of some of these appendages which is especially noticeable on seal No. 450, where, at first sight it appears to be part of a collar round the neck, the tusks of the elephant are quite clear in every case. The tail is always represented as held high at right angles to the body, and there are claws or pincers at its tips. This is not clear on any of the seals illustrated and comparison should be made with another seal found earlier.[8] The tail is substantial and sometimes striped, in conjunction with the tiger-like hind-quarters of the animal, it was probably intended to represent the tail of the animal, though it is not of uniform thickness throughout. Some of the medieval writers have declared, quite erroneously, that the lion has a claw in the tip of its tail with which to lash itself in anger. Possibly the same idea was prevalent in ancient Sindh concerning the tiger; otherwise the purpose of a claw at the tip of the tail of these composite animals could not be explained (Pls. 39).

In place of the usual seal objects in front of the urus on seal 316, there is a curious figure that from the position of the arms and legs appears to be dancing before the animal. What

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this figure is intended to represent would be difficult to say, the tail precludes its being human, and it can hardly be a monkey on account of large ears, which the impression does not clearly show. Possibly it represents a human figure wearing a mask and false tail for a ceremonial dance before a deified animal.

(ii) Human faced goat or ram

Marshall[9] has reported the presence of a human faced goat or a ram or possibly a more composite creature still, part goat or ram, part bull and part man, which figures in a cult scene of the tree goddess, where the creature has been described as a minor tutelary deity accompanying the votary into the presence of the goddess. The waved horizontal horns of this animal are characteristic of the goat in Mesopotamia, but in Egyptian art, they are distinctive of the large horned ram. This composite creature is surely not intended to be sacrificed, but represents some theriomorphic deity or "genie" and this may be the case with other animals depicted in similar scenes, but with this difference, that some of them have not yet been partly metamorphosed into human shape. A parallel to them may be found in the human headed lions of Mesopotamia, which figure so prominently in Asseriyan art and which have generally been interpreted as genii, but which in one of the cuciform inscriptions detailing certain types of deities are described as actual gods (Pl. 20).

A human headed ram has also been reported from Chanhudaro. According to the excavator, it is difficult to identify the strange beast unearthed from Chanhudaro, which is roughly made of pottery and uncoloured, it has a hollow body from which the hind-quarters, legs and the tail are now missing. The head was modelled separately and then attached to the body by inserting a long backward projection into the open tubular trunk; apparently the legs were attached in much the same way. The badly mutilated face is human and wears a long, thin beard. A seal from Mohenjodaro represents the human shaped goat. This figure could harldy have been used as a toy and was probably a cult figure.[10]

III. MULTI-HEADED ANIMALS

Besides the usual animals, there was a class of animals, apparently with a divine entity, which were represented with more than usual heads as well as double heads, glimpses of which are provided here:-

(a) An irregular plaque with a flat smooth base and slightly rounded upper surface was discovered from Mohenjodaro. Its one end projects at right angles a horned head with oval pillets to represent the eyes and a long strip of clay for the mouth. Slightly beyond this head, the plaque terminates in the head of a bull like animal, whose horns are broken. These two heads face in opposite directions. The base of the plaque

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is smooth, but it seems to have never been coloured red, and it may have been fixed to a clay body to represent the multiheaded animals that are sometimes, though rarely, depicted on the seals; or may have served to ornament the jar. (Mackay, *op. cit.*, p. 283).

(b) The beast on seal No. 494 of Mohenjodaro[11] represent a combination of the usual urus-like animal, with two other heads, those of an antilope and short horned bull. A possible explanation of this device is that its owner may have sought the protection or assistance of three separate deities represented by the heads of these three animals. The inscription on the seal is unusually long; it would apparently have been written on the actual seal from right to left. The arrangement of two extra heads on this seal suggests that they were cut as an after-thought, and, if this was so, the lower line of inscription may have been added at the same time. Possibly this additional line refers to the nature or meaning of the three-headed beast, the owner's name being in the usual place above. There are three examples of this three-headed animal. In one case the body is like that of an urus-like animal, two of the heads are those of ibex and antelope and the third one is of the short horned bull (Pls. 36, 43).

IV. OTHER COMPOSITE ANIMALS

(i) Several other instances of composite animals[12] include part ram or goat, part bull and part elephant with human countenance, figured on seals 378, 380 and 381 from Mohenjodaro and apparently represented in the stone images in the round. Such stone images can hardly have been other than the cult objects intended for worship. On the other hand, the seals, like most of the seals found at Mohenjodaro and Harappa were almost certainly amulets which, we may surmise, were used by the votaries of this curious form of syncretic deity.

(ii) Another chimera-like creature[13] is portrayed on seal No. 382, the three heads of which resemble those of the unicorns, but are distinguished by varying type of horns, the lowest being of a bison, the upper most those of an ibex, while the middle ones are those of an ibex curved forward instead of backward.

(iii) In another seal from Mohenjodaro,[14] the lowest of the three heads is definitely that of a bison, the second that of a unicorn, and the third is that of an ibex with horns reversed. Intimately related also to these three-headed chimeras are the motifs of five or six limbed Svāstikas terminating in various kinds of horned heads or occasionally with limb only terminating[15] in a 'Unicorn' head, and others left blank. With them may also be linked the triple interlaced tigers of seal 386, which may be supposed to embody the conception of triply powerful demon, though, on the other hand, it may be nothing more than a fanciful design of that in which Indian imagination has always delighted in (Pl. 61).

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V. HUMAN WITH HORNS

There is a difference of opinion as to the sanctity attached to the horns making them divine for deities adorned with such horns. This aspect had its origin, no doubt in primitive animal worship, the horns alone being retained when the animal god assumed human shape and afterwards becoming a badge, as it were, of super-human prowess which might be transformed to any other deity or hero or demon, whether of animal origin or not. The custom, however, was so worldwide that it might have been developed independently in many other countries; and, even as regards India and Mesopotamia.

A copper tablet from Mohenjodaro depicts a human figure with two horns, a tail and holding a bow in his right hand and a roundish object in the left (Pl. 41). In this connection Mackay[16] has observed as follows:-

> "The inscription on the reverse of this very interesting tablet is in a better state of preservation than was the case with another tablet published before.[17] It will be seen that the human figure is quite similar, wearing horns or feathers on the head and carrying a bow. A tail is quite clearly represented on the tablet, whereas, though also shown on the earlier found tablet, it is far from clear. Whether this figure represents a hunter, disguised in the skin of some animal, or a deity, half human-half beast, it is difficult to say, but a man–bull is certainly represented in one of the seals and is also portrayed in the round." (Pl. 40).

There are other instances of horned[18] human figurines in the terracottas too, one such specimen has been defined thus: Pottery once coated with a red slip. The eyes are usual flat, elongated pillets, the mouth an incised strip of clay set in a deep cut. A short necklet, from which four ornaments hang in front, appears to represent two strings of beads. The long scarf round the neck with its two ends apparently fastened by a brooch, hangs so loosely that it must represent[19] some kind of woven material. This figurine, obviously that of a male, wears the horn of a bull. There are no ears and though the figure was evidently carefully made, there is general absence of details. Another human head with the horns of a bull has been described as the hollow mask of human head surmounted by a pair of horns, now badly broken.[20] Evidently, it is made in a mould as the back is very roughly finished. Two holes at the edge of this mask below the horns possibly served to fasten or sew it to something.

VI. TIGER-LEOPARD AND RHINOCEROS

Marshall has reported a composite animal form from Mohenjodaro, displayed on a tablet (Vs.-3590) having hind-quarters of a rhinoceros and the fore-quarters of a leopard or a tiger. It also has unicorn's horn and a manger stands before it.[21]

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Another composite animal depicted (Seal No. IK 4209; Pl. XCIII-9) has an antelope's head at each end of a body which could be of a cow or of a rhino. This curious beast, the like of which was never seen at Mohenjodaro, indeed existed in the imagination of the people living there and therefore its portrayal had perhaps a magical value.

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17. Marshall, John; *op. cit.*, P1. CXVII-16.
18. Mackay, F.J.H., *op. cit.*, (*F.E.M.*), p. 271.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 271, P1. LXXII-7.
20. *Ibid.*, p. 273, P1. LXXII-21.
21. Marshall, John, *op. cit.*, (*M.I.C.*), p. 399, P1. CXVII-16.

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5

Sacred Animals, Birds and Reptiles

From the time immemorial, man has been adoring many deities in one or the other form. Alongwith these deities he was obliged sometimes, besides adoring the deities in human form also to adore the animals, which were supposed to be their vehicles. This development was of the subsequent times but in the earlier times, when he had to dwell in the forests, the wild animals had to be encountered by him and he applied his mind to protect himself from these wild beasts. While he could take to arms like bow and arrow, in case of need, but that was not enough, because he could be vulnerable to sudden attacks from such animals. And soon he thought of protecting himself by adoring these wild animals and for doing so he had to prepare some amulets or *talismāns* engraving their effigies on them and wearing them. How far was he successful in his efforts, in those remote times, it would be quite impossible to state at this stage, but the presence in abundance of the amulets inscribed with such animals from Harappan sites, testify to the popularity of the cult practices in which, the adoration of animals, birds and even reptiles had been quite popular with people at large. With the passage of time and the development of the iconographic features of the deities and the composition of the literature connected therewith, many of the animals and birds were considered sacred because of their being the vehicles of the deities like the bull for Śiva, lion for Durgā, swan for Brahmā, elephant for Indra and Garuḍa for Viṣṇu. Not only that even reptiles had their own sanctity because Śiva is supposed to have snakes as the ornaments of his body. Though the antiquarian remains of the Harappan sites have testified to the presence of many animals, wild as well as domestic, but in this chapter only those enjoying some sanctity with Harappan people have been selected for discussion.

I. ANIMALS

(i) Buffalo

The buffalo is the vehicle of Yama, the god of death and associated with him in worship for which reason the pious Hindu will not use it for ploughing or carting. He is also the dark demon of the water named as *Bhainsāsura* deified as a corn spirit to be propitiated (for he is essentially a malignant type of deity).

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However, this animal is rare and is found on three seals by Marshall[1] (Nos. 304-06). On all the three it is in a very typical attitude, with nose raised up sniffing the air. In fact, like most of the buffaloes of the modern Indian villages, it appears to be in belligerent mood. On two of the seals there is exactly the same form of manger as in front of the bull, but on the third (No. 304), this feature is missing and there is no inscription to take its place. This seal, however, appears to be unfinished. The portrayal of animal is exceedingly natural.

The presence of the buffalo (from Mohenjodaro) in Mackay's book over seal Nos. 279 and 510, had been the subject matter of discussion with scholars. The former depicts a buffalo with its head so represented as to show both the rugged horns, below which is placed an apparently partitioned feeding trough; in the extreme left corner is shown a man with his foot upon the buffalo's nose, grasping a horn with one hand and with the other about to thurst a spear with a barbed point into the animal's back; there was a pictoral on the top right, only one letter being preserved, the others having been broken off. The same scene also appears on two other sealings at Mohenjodaro. Mackay observes with a great deal of diffidence that this scene may represent a belief similar to that of the legend of Dundubhī, the buffalo demon, whom Śiva and other gods attacked with a trident; though their weapons proved powerless against the animal, they eventually killed it by means of incantations. He quotes as his authority for the Dundubhī legend.[2] In the ninth chapter of the *Avantikṣetramāhātmya* of the Avantyakhaṇḍaṁ of the *Skanda Purāṇa,* the story of Dundubhī, the buffalo demon named Halāhala having been killed by the Gaṇas of Śiva as well as the other gods assembled in the Rudrakṣetra near Avanti, is described. J.N. Banerjea[3] however, does not agree with Mackay and observes that:-

> "The parallelism noticed by Mackay is no doubt very interesting: I remember one passage from the *Durga Saptaśati,* which while describing the fight between the goddess Durga and the evil incarnate in the form of a buffalo demon says:-
>
> एवमुक्ता समुत्पत्य सारुढ़ातं महासुरम् ।
> पादेनाक्रम्य कण्ठे च शूले नैनमताडयत् ।।
>
> *Devi Mahatmya*
>
> (The goddess after saying this, jumped to climb upon the great demon, attacked him with her foot and struck his neck with her *Śūla*). (It could be a trident or a barbed spear).
>
> "The Puranic description of this fight may also be a close parallel, but the human figure in Mohenjodaro seals seems to be a male one and the different forms of plastic representations of Durgā Mahiṣāsuramardinī have very little similarity to the scene on the Indus seals just described. Mackay's seal No. 510, shows a

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> buffalo which seems to have attacked a number of people who are lying on the ground in every conceivable position. Without excluding the possibility of its depicting an episode that occurred to some of the inhabitants of Mohenjodaro, Mackay observes:-"we may perhaps see in this scene a god or the emblem of a god, attacking his enemies, a parallel to the well known scene on the slate palattes of the first dynasty of Egypt, where the king himself in his character of a strong bull gores a prostrate enemy."[4]

A little scene also on a clay sealing[5] shows a buffalo or a bull tossing a man over his head. In seal No. 522, a man is seated on a tree with a tiger below, is quite a faniliar subject found over the seals of Mohenjodaro, but this particular seal is so well preserved and could be termed as the best example of the depiction of such a scene. In view of the frequency with which such specimens are found, it would illustrate a legend which was very popular.

In order, however, to appreciate the representation of the demon Dundubhī in the form of a buffalo, it would be of interest to know about the mythological story, available in the subsequent literature, which runs as follows:-

(a) Birth of Dundubhī

Dānavas were the off-springs of Kaśyapa, grand son of Brahmā and son of Mārīca by his wife Danu, the daughter of Dakṣaprajāpati, Maya chief among the Dañavas earned great reputation as a unique architect. Once he attended a dance programme in *Devaloka*, where he fell in love with Hemā dancing with the deva-women. When the dance was over, Maya told Hemā about his love for her. Hemā too had fallen in love with Maya and they left the place in secret and reached the southern slopes of the Himalayas, where they built a beautiful city called Hemapura and they lived there. They had two sons, Dundubhī and Māyāvī, both of them were equally distinguished in prowess. (*Uttara Rāmāyaṇa*).

(b) Relations with Rāvaṇa

Maya performed *tapas* for a daughter in western plains of Mount Kailāśa. On one of those days Pārvatī went out of Kailāśa to feed Brāhmaṇas in celebration of the birthday of Subrāmaṇya. In the absence of Pārvatī a deva-woman called Madhurā who had observed *Somavāravrata* and had come to Kailāśa to salute Mahādeva (Śiva), who enjoyed her for sometime. On her return, Pārvatī noticed that the ashes worn by Śiva were transferred to the breasts of Madhurā. Drawing the natural inference from this, Pārvatī got enraged and cursed Mandhurā to be transformed into a frog. Then Śiva blessed her that she would regain her original-self after twelve years and shall have a heroic husband. Madhurā who was thus turned into a frog fell into a well close to where Maya was engaged in *tapas*. After twelve years,

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the frog regained its original form and became Madhurā again. Maya, who saw her, adopted her as a daughter and brought her up giving her the name of Mandodarī. Ṃandodarī became Rāvaṇa's wife and thus Dundubhī became the father-in-law of Rāvaṇa.

(c) Becomes a youth (Life style)

The second canto of Kiṣkindhā Kāṇḍa of the *Vālmīki Rāmāyana* describes the life of Dundubhī, according to which the heroic demon possessed the form of a buffalo and had the strength of a thousand elephants. Proud and haughty over his own prowess and loosing his head over the boon he had received from the lord Śiva, Dundubhī went to fight with the ocean, the lord of rivers. (*Mahābhārata,* Anuśāsonapawan, Ch.11).

(d) Fight with Bālī and death

Haughty almost to madness over the unrivalled strength and prowess he got as a result of the boon, Dundubhī went about challanging whomsoever he met, for a fight. But none dared to accept the challange. Then he went to the seashore and challenged Varuṇa, who appearing on the crest of the sea waves said, "I am not strong and powerful enough to fight with you. Only Himvān can do that. So please go north". Accordingly Dundubhī went to North to Himvān and challenged him in great rage. Himvān clad in neat and white garments appeared and spoke in humble tone, "O mighty Dānava, I am not used to fighting war. My job is to arrange for the necessary convenience to saints and sages. But there is, in southern India, a very powerful monkey called Bālī, the king of Kiṣkindhā, who alone can combat with you. Dundubhī then went southwards to Kiṣkindhā and challanged Bālī. Terrible as the dark clouds in the sky, the Dānava, who possessed the body and horns of a buffalo, began roaring like hell at the tower gates of Kiṣhindhā, uprooting trees with his horns and tearing the earth with his hoofs. Disturbed by the noise, Bālī along with his wife Tārā came out of his palace and said to Dundubhī, "Look here, please, I am only the king of monkeys. Why should you, who are so very strong smash my tower." But these soft words of Bālī, only kindled Dundubhī's anger all the more and his challange became fiercer. Then Bālī, wearing the golden chain given by Indra, rushed forth to engage Dundubhī in mortal duel in which the former began gaining more and more strength, while the latter became weaker and weaker. Dundubhī then took a flight to the sky to save his life. But, the moon rose then and in the moon-light Bālī and his brother Sugrīva followed Dundubhī, who entered a terrible cave covered with something like a forest of grass. After keeping Sugrīva at the opening of the cave, Bālī followed Dundubhī into the cave. Sugrīva waited there for one year for the return of Bālī from the cave, when one day he witnessed flowing of blood out of the mouth of the cave, and believing by mistake that Bālī was dead, he closed the mouth of the cave with a huge stone and returned home.

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But Bālī, who had by then killed Dundubhī kicked off the stone and came out of the cave. (*Rāmāyaṇa,* Sundara Kāṇḍa, Canto-9.11.46).

(e) Blood of Dundubhī

During Bālī's duel with Dundubhī, blood from the body of the latter spurted out to the skies and it fell into the hermitage of the sage Mataṅga at Ṛṣyamūka, where the sage was performing *tapas.* The sage then cursed that whosoever was responsible for the blood falling in his *āśrama,* his head would be broken to pieces, if he ever mounted Ṛṣyamūka.

It would therefore, be quite appropriate to concede to the interpretation of Mackay over the seal from Mohenjodaro, to have been based on factual justifications.

Some other representations of the buffalo from Mohenjodaro, are described below:-

Clay models of buffaloes are rare in Mohenjodaro and are almost absent in faience and there is only one in bronze.[6] This animal is also not represented on the seals. The pottery[7] model comes from a low stratum and though roughly made, it shows the animal in typical attitude with its head raised up, sniffing the wind. Possibly, this model represents a domesticated buffalo. On the seals the animal is always represented in a turbulent attitude.[8] Bones as well as the teeth of *Bos bubalis* have been found in the mounds of Mohenjodaro, which do not differ apparently from the modern beasts.

The buffalo is frequently represented in the Sumerian seals. Besides, the animal is also found mentioned on some of the Jemdet Nasr tablets. It was probably domesticated in Sumer in very early times since it happens to be a most useful animal in every way. Owing probably to the ill reputation of the wild species, it is regarded in India as the vehicle of Yama, the God of Death and the Hindu population will not use it for ploughing or carting in general, though the people of other communities employ it freely for either purpose. The buffalo is also sacrificed to the goddess Durgā. That the beast was regarded as sacred by the people of the Indus Valley civilization is suggested by its appearance on the seals, though perhaps more probably on account of its being feared than for any benificial attributes associated with it.

Buffalo has also been considered as the dark demon of water and under the name of Mahiṣāsura is deified as a corn spirit as well to be propitiated when the grain is coming into ear since he is essentially a malignant deity.

Buffalo attacked by a lion

The excavations at Diamabad produced a crescent shaped pot-sherd, belonging to the late Harappan period. This pot-sherd is of thick reddish ware of fine fabric without slip or wash and shows striation marks on both the surfaces. Its edges have been rounded to achieve the

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crescent shape. On the concave side of the pot-sherd is engraved a scene of a tiger attacking a buffalo from behind. The forceful attack of the tiger and the panic of the buffalo have been excellently depicted. On the convex backside of this sherd is a horizontal row of six lozenges with hatched upper half of each shape and the open space below between the two lozenges. The number of hatched lines is generally five and occasionally four. It should be noted that the tiger usually attacks the buffalo from behind and the depiction is remarkable. The delibrate shaping and the engraving would suggest that it was a cult object for seeking protection of the buffaloes from the tiger.[9]

(ii) Monkeys

Even if it was not a common savage trait to believe in the descent of man from one of the lower animals, the resemblence between human beings and monkeys would be sufficiently strong to suggest such a state. Consequently, we find that not only man is regarded as an evolved monkey, but also that the monkey is believed to be a demigod. The chief home of the cult of monkeys is India, with its monkey god Hanumān, who first appears as a hero in the *Rāmāyaṇa* of Vālmīki. In the present day India, the life of a monkey in orthodox villages is quite safe and its magic influence is sometimes invoked against whirlwind, while it is invoked to avert sterility. It is not in India alone that the monkeys are adored but they are reported to be venerated in other countries of the world too.

Though the presence of monkey is witnessed in the remains of the Indus artefacts, in one form of the other, but it would perhaps be difficult to assume that he had acquired a cult of his own, though his reverence in one way or the other, during remote times cannot be completely ruled out. The Vedic literature too mentions Vṛṣākapi, who happened to be a great friend of Indra and was his favourite. But this epithet of Vṛṣākapi was patronised by several other deities. In my work on Hanumān, I have tried to establish that the same Vṛṣākapi, of the Vedic times was transformed into Mahākapi, the so common an epithet for Hanumān of the later times.

Models of monkeys were quite numerous, chiefly in faience or vitreous paste and seldom in pottery. But few examples have been found in the upper levels, more probably from accident than because they were rare in the latter occupations. The little head and a complete figure are both made of white paste which has lost its glaze; and two others of the same material, the first from a very low level are also available.[10] There is very little difference between these models either in technique or style. A figure of monkey[11] is exceptionally well made in pottery, the pouting lips and general air of alarm so charactristic of the animal being well portrayed; its modeller was an artist of no mean ability nor was the maker of the paste figure, which though unfinished held great promise. A figure of monkey modelled in clay was also found from the site of Mohenjodaro. No bones of monkeys could be discovered from

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Mohenjodaro and it is therefore not possible to identify the species which those models represent. It could be the common brown monkey which are commonly found in India. In some parts of India the bones of monkeys are regarded as unlucky and are supposed to pollute the ground (Pl 44).

The monkey[12] may have been regarded as sacred in the ancient times as now, though according Crooks, the worship of this animal does not come down from the earliest Brahmanical faith. But it is, however, held that the cult is very old. The monkey worship, according to a school of thought, is more popular in the Uttar Pradesh, than in Punjab, though the same is especially revered in the South India.

Though, in India, the monkey godling Hanumān[13] is noted for his skill in magic, grammer and the art of healing, it is worthy to note that some of the same attributes were ascribed to the god Thod in Egypt, who is commonly represented in the form of an ape. John Marshall, however, feels that the cult of the Monkey-god is more widespread and deeply rooted in India than in any other country and is adored in the various non-Aryan tribes. As Hanumān, he is figured in half human, half animal form and his idols commonly guard the entrance of forts, towns and villages.

(iii) The Bull

Of all the animals depicted in terracotta[14], faience, steatite, stone or on seals, the bull has been often rendered faithfully and artistically. Its various specimens unearthed at Mohenjodaro, Harappa and Chanhudaro and those few published from Rangpur, Lothal and Kalibangan enable us to say that the two main species of the short horned and humpless and the long curved horned and humped bulls existed in the whole of north-west and western India from Baluchistan to Saurashtra. They were domesticated and well known to the populace. Furthermore, there is little doubt that the bull was worshipped and that there was a bull-cult, and the bull was probably carried in procession as on the *Pala* (new moon day of September or *Bhādrapada*) today, and its small effigies carried on poles. Small amulets were perhaps worn around the neck as do the sect of Lingayats today, though this itself is a very late practice of the twelfth century, started in Karnataka and then spreading to many parts of South India. Therefore there are several specimens of bulls with garlands, hollow effigies and also a painted terracotta horn with a hole. The great muscular strength of the bull was admired and the artist made an attempt to portray it faithfully in many ways. In Sanskrit, there is an oft repeated expression of *Vṛṣa-Skandha* or the one having the shoulders as strong and broad as that of a bull. From the way some of the small specimens in shell, with one surface flat, have been made, indicates that these small bull-heads were pinned on wooden or some such blocks and kept on a table or fixed on to a wall. The small terracotta, steatite and copper-bronze specimens

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were similarly exhibited as art objects. The presence of the bull in various sites in India, is brought out as under:-

(a) Harappa

The bull, both humped and humpless is closely associated with Śiva and daily worshipped by his followers, and once a year, on the occasion of its own festival—by Hindus of all sects. The liberation of a bull (*Vṛṣotsarga*) dedicated to Śiva and stamped with its trident is an act of highest merit, believed to provide a deceased person with vehicle to the next world.

In the pre-historic times, the worship of the bull (with which must be included the wild bison, buffalo and domesticated ox) was widely disseminated throughout the Middle and nearer East, where he appeared sometimes as a beneficent guardian of homestead, sometimes as a malevolent storm demon. That this cult was very prevalent in Chalcolithic times throughout Sindh, Punjab and Baluchistan, is proved by a large number of terracotta bulls found at Mohenjodaro and Harappa and on contemporary sites in the Northern and Southern Baluchistan as well as the frequent delineation of the bull on the pottery. Whether at this time, the bull was specially associated with the three-faced god, who has been identified as the prototype of Śiva, there is at present no evidence to show, but it is quite likely that its cult was then independent and only absorbed by Śavism at some later period (Pls. 47-48).

The bull was portrayed on the seals and other antiquarian remains from Harappa and Mohenjodaro, variously and a few such examples are described below:-

(i) *Brahmaṇi Bull:* Although its original habitat is a matter of discussion, this type of bull can for the present be associated with the Indus Valley civilization, for though humped cattle also appear in the art of other countries, they are seldom shown with the immensely long horns that they possessed on Indian seals. That humped cattle were known in the ancient Elam and Susa. A clay figurine of an ox found in a pre-Flood stratum at Ur appears to have a very definite hump and later on there are other examples as well. In Assyrian times humped cattle were brought into Assyria from the south or the sea country, though it is true that in the shape of their horns and the lesser prominence of the hump, it is impossible to compare them quite closely with the animals of the Indus Valley seals (Pls. 42 b-d; 45-46).

The exceptionally fine portrayal of this animal over some seals[15] projects even better the worship of the magnificent animal, found at Mohenjodaro.[16] The technique is slightly different and it does not look to be the work of the same cutter. Both animal is represented as wearing garlands round the neck.

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(b) Mehi

Considering the number of the representation of the humped bull and the uniformity of the type throughout the entire Chalcolithic sites of Makaran and Jhulwana, it seems difficult not to believe that this animal like its Indian counterpart, the 'Brahmani Bull' was an object of popular reverence, if not actual worship. If this assumption is correct, the temptation is obviously great to seek some connection with the pre-historic worship of the population which occupied the extreme western marches of India, before the Aryan emergence during the Vedic times and the great role played by Śiva's bull in Indian cult[17] from a very early historical age. There is scarcely any indication of such a cult to be found in the oldest Vedic literature. This might lead us to infer that it was an inheritance from much earlier times to which the autochthonous population of northern India with its deeply rooted archaic bent has clung not withstanding the great transformation brought about in its civilization, racial constitution, and language by the triamphant invasion of its northern counterpart. But the object touched upon is too wide and at present still too speculative to be pursued here further in what is meant for a plain record of antiquarian facts.

Sir Aruel Steen[18] while discussing the presence of the bull figurines in the Shahi Tump locality in Baluchistan has observed that, "It appears highly probable, that this had its reason in some motive of cult and the abundance in which exactly corresponding bull figurines were recovered under similar conditions at Kolwa and Mashki sites of Kulli and Mehi fully confirm this conclusion. It deserves, however, to be noted that the figurines of the ornamental female obviously meant for a goddess of which specimens are found at Loralai and Zhob Chalcolithic sites and in far greater number, also at Kolwa and Mashki sites, not a single one turned up at Shahi tump. It seems probable that these little representations of a humped bull had served as votive offerings to some divinity representing the creative power in the world. Thus the similarity of the humped bull, the *vāhana* or emblem of Śiva, necessarily suggests itself. The similarity is striking enough to raise the question whether we may not have to recognise here the influence of an ancient cult established already in pre-Aryan India."

(c) Chanhudaro

The most common[19] model animal at Chanhudaro was the humped bull. As a rule these bulls were coarsely made, with simple round clay pellets for eyes, a pronounced hump, long, rather thick horns projecting forwards and forelegs and hind-legs joined together. This union of legs has been noticed in the model bulls from the lower levels of Mohenjodaro, whereas the animals from the upper levels invariably have separated legs. Indeed at Mohenjodaro, this difference served approximately to date the levels.

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Some times the eyes of the model bulls, like those of the human figurines are indented in the middle to represent the pupils, indeed, one bull has its eyes represented by two strips of clay deeply enough indented to have taken ball like pellets of clay. So realistic an eye was, however, as rare at Mohenjodaro as it was common at Chanhudaro. The model bulls are commonly not the Brahmani bulls. They can at best be compared[20] with the little grey cattle that trundle round in pairs drawing small carts after them.

(d) Lothal

The worship[21] of the bull (the Vehicle of Śiva) is said to have been indicated by occurrence of the bull and the bull-like (unicorn) on the seals. It may be noted that the Indus seals were possibly used mostly for a commercial purpose and not for their magical value. This does not however preclude engraving animals considered sacred by the individual owners on the seals to serve as trade marks. If this is accepted the total absence of the long horned bull in Lothal seals suggests that this species was not very much venerated in Gujarat. It is the short horned humpless variety which is represented here.The bull is found present in many other Harappan and post-Harappan sites in the country.

(iv) Goat

The goat was considered to be a sacred animal at Mohenjodaro. The animal is represented in composite form having the face of a human and this aspect has already been discussed in association with the tree goddess. The bronze goat from the upper levels is an exceptionally fine piece of work, only eclipsed by a buffalo found in another part of Mohenjodaro, but, unfortunately, not so well preserved. This model goat was found in a copper vase, together with some smaller jars and other objects beneath the mud floor of an unimportant house; and it appears that care was evidently taken of it because, it must have been especially valued by its owner. Another figure of goat is modelled in clay. Though the horns are missing the prominent beard is characteristic. The curious treatment of the eyes and the mouth, suggests that it was possibly intended to represent a human headed animal figure or a goat man. Most probably the goat was domesticated by the Indus people, though no bones of this animal have been found. It has been noticed that in both the above cases, as well as in an other seal, the animal had horizontal spiral horns. The same variety of goat is also pictured on an early limestone plaque from Nippur and in Egypt it seems to have replaced the ram of Mendes, with its straight horizontal horns, but its date is not certain. In many ancient cults, the goat is associated with a deity and there is reason to think that it was regarded as sacred at Mohenjodaro, because, sometimes it is represented with a human head. In India at the present day, it is usually black goats that are selected for sacrifice and the animal's curious habit of shivering on occasions is regarded by some as caused by some indwelling spirit.

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(Mackay, *FEM,* p. 292). In this connection in the later Indian mythology, the head of Dak.sa Prajāpati, was replaced by the head of a male goat, earning him the composite form of a human with the head of a goat. There is another deity having the similar character, Skanda, according to J.N. Banerjea (*op.cit.,* p. 363), is also sometimes described as goat headed or Cāgavaktra, when he is called Naigameya.

II. ACQUATIC ANIMALS

(i) Tortoise

The tortoise has been considered to be sacred in the Hindu spiritual thought from the ancient past. The exact time when it achieved the position of sanctity is difficult to point put but the fact that Viṣṇu, according to the Brahmanical spiritual thought, took to the form of a tortoise at the time of the churning of the ocean, in order to bear the weight of the mountain used as the churning rod. Besides it has been described to be the vehicle of the Yamunā. Both these aspects of its personality relate to the historical period, but the position he held during the Harappan times has to be examined.

In this connection it may be pointed out that a well made model of a turtle (tortoise)[22] discovered from Mohenjodaro, is of special interest, because only three such specimens have been found, one of them is cut in shell. Besides, several bones of the river turtles were found at Mohenjodaro. The specimens[23] found from the later levels are exceptionally well-made, while another one of them was of inferior quality. The turtle may have been used for human consumption, but such use, if at all it was there, was not quite widespread since only few remains have been found. Models of very early date of Nile turtle have been found in Egypt and the animal also appeared about the same date on the white ware of that country. It is quite often represented over the pottery from Susa; a specially notable example shows it in relief on the rim of a pottery jar, holding two snakes by the neck, with its front flippers. Its very prominent position on this jar suggests that it was a sacred animal; in Sumer the turtle sometimes represented the water god Ea or Enki. Whether any sanctity was attached to it by the Indus people would be difficult to say at this stage, but the fact remains that the first found mould of the turtle was unearthed in a building beneath a stupa, which indeed was a sacred place. The turtle appears in association with *gharial* on two amulets,[24] its only occurrence on either a seal or a sealing.

(ii) Crocodile

Crocodiles are rarely found in the seals of Mohenjodaro. There are only three seals No. 45, 133 and 488, which could be discussed here. On seal No. 45 the reptile[25] is carved on one of the two inscribed sides of the seals, which is quite an unusual place for its representation.

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It is quite clearly depicted on seal 133, holding possibly a fish in its mouth. The cylinder seal No. 488, shows a fish in the jaws of reptile[26] as also on seal No. 45. The crocodile appears on two sealings as well. But crocodile has appeared in terrocotta sealings of Harappa. Currently *ghariyal* alone is found in the Indus basin, though *makara* is still stated to exist in the rivers of the Sindh. The former is quite harmless to man. There also had been *makaras* in the sacred tanks of Mangho Pir, 16 kms. from N. W. of Karachi; one of which was believed to be more than five hundred years old; they were treated as sacred to the *pir* or the saint and live goats were offered to them by the visitors.[27]

However, from the point of view of the religious importance of *makara* or crocodile, it may be pointed out that *makara* was considered quite sacred in the later times, when it was described as the vehicle of the Gaṅgā, and was so frequently represented in the Indian plastic art right from the Gupta period or even earlier. Keeping this in view if some religious importance was attached to the crocodile during the Indus valley, it would not be surprising.

III. BIRDS

(i) Peacock

M.S. Vats[28] feels that the peacock which is believed to be of considerable sanctity, even today, being the vehicle of Kārttikeya, had its own sanctity with the people of Harappa, who projected him over the vases found buried with the dead. His observations in this connection are quite interesting which relate to the painting on some pottery pieces:-

"The pot which was covered with an inverted bowl is decorated at the shoulder with three flying peacocks alternating with stars. Placed horizontally in the body of each peacock is a therianthropic figure, probably representing the *Sūkṣana Śarīra* or the etherial body of the dead being carried to the heaven. From this as well as the frequent occurrence of the peacock motif often with horns—on other burial pots, it is evident, that the peacock was regarded with peculiar sanctity in connection with the cult of the dead. It is painted in two bands; the lower one with the rows of leaves alternating with pairs of stars, the upper with more elaborate scenes, seemingly of a mythical character. In the upper band, on opposite sides of jars are two similar groups of figures showing a bovine animal probaly a bull—with long incurving horns on either side of a beaked human figure, who has secured them by the neck with ropes held in hands and under the feet and who also has a bow and arrow in his left hand. This creature is human, but for the beak and wavylines rising from his head. In the left hand representation, the animal on the left is being attacked by a hound which has caught hold of its tail in his mouth. It will also be noticed that the hindquarters of the animal are shown in outlines only, while in the right-hand-one, they are blocked in. Behind the hound are two horned peacocks in flight. The scene evidently shows the proceeds from left to right, where

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the principal representation is again repeated with some difference. To the right of the left hand scene, that is to say between the two representations, is a goat of inordinately large size, whose enormous horns are ornamented with eight trident like devices and whose hind-quarters, like those of the left hand bull, are also shown in the outline only. The trident is associated with Śiva, whose prototype has been found at Mohenjodaro and with other deities as well as the horns (with which the trident was to become intimately connected), were regarded as the emblems of divinity by the Indus people, and it is not unlikely that the super-natural size of this goat and the trident shaped crests have a similar significance.[29] On the other side of the jar is the repetition of the scene already described, but with a difference, that each one of the bulls is now bedecked with a trident shaped crest between the horns, similar to the crest on the horns of the divine goat and that the tail of the left hand scene is missing having seemingly been bitten off by the hound. Between the bulls and the composite being are two small peacocks, presumably the same that are seen behind the hound in the left hand scene and are now reduced in size for want of space. The peacocks, like the goat and two composite beings in these scenes, are facing right and this may be taken to be the direction in which the figures are depicted as moving, though exigencies of composition demanded that the two bulls should face one another with the composite being in between." (Pl. 34).

It is evident from the above that peacock had its sanctity, known to the Indus people, especially in the funerary rites, when it was shown painted over the burial jars, found from the graves.

(ii) Dove

The model dove (which is frequently mentioned in the literature of historical India) with outstretched wings set on a little pedestal with a flared base is available at all the levels of Mohenjodaro. The figurines of the bird were discovered from Elmite,[30] and Minoan and at Ur a dove on the painted pottery has more striking resemblance to the Indus Valley models than those of Elmite and Minoan. The dove was considered with special favour both in Sindh and in Sumer. Whether there was a cult connected with it or not cannot be categorically stated, though the bird seems to have been sacred to the goddess Ninkharsag in Sumer and may have been associated in the same way with the goddess whose representations in clay are so often found at Mohenjodaro. It is certainly more than a coincidence, that the models of this bird also with the wings outstretched, occur as early as the Neolithic age in Crete, where a Mother Goddess was all powerful; in Sumer, where the bird was definitely associated with the great goddess Nin Kharsang, and also in the Indus Valley, where a goddess seems to have been a principal deity. Prof. Gordon Childe has pointed out that both the doves and snakes were associated with the cult of Mother Goddess in Sardinia and Brittany.[31] The presence of a

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dove[32] bird is also reported from Mohenjodaro by Marshall. The eye holes in this case appear to have been drilled for taking inlay.

IV. REPTILES

Snakes

The snakes too had their own religious significance in the Indian spiritual thought from the ancient past. Though the reptiles did not find an eminent position in the Vedic texts but the later Vedic and post Vedic literature could hardly ignore its presence. A snake was conceived to be carrying the load of the entire earth on its hood, while for Viṣṇu, he served as a cushioned bed and by assuming many hoods, he served as a shade over the lord's head as a canopy. But for Śiva he served as his ornaments over the ankles, arms, neck, girdle and even in the ear as ear-rings. He, of course, had to suffer humiliation at the hands of Kṛṣṇa, who ultimately made him leave the waters of Yamunā. The serpent played a role in the life of the Buddha too, while in Jainism, the reptile enjoyed a more respectable position, and provided a conopy to the Tīrthankaras, assuming many hoods. It is also associated with several other deities of Jaina pantheon, but the legend of Yakṣiṇī Padmavati is throughout associated with snakes and she belongs to the nether-region. This serpent symbol is well manifested in art and so is her symbol of lotus which is responsible for the origin of her name. She is also worshipped as Manasā, or the goddess of snakes. Thus the snake had dominated in one form or the other in the Indian religious thought of the historical period.

It is also found present in the Harappan artefacts. In an amulet from Mohenjodaro[33] which is rod-like, a slight ridge along each side is left by a double mould. It is badly rubbed, and in places the details are not quite clear. On one side, a kneeling figure holds in its hands an object, which is evidently offering to a tree deity. Beyond the tree, there is a row of characters. The reverse side shows a cobra partly reclining on a low platform or dais, a tree and two pictograph signs. A standard may perhaps be represented at the extreme left, but this is uncertain. There is no doubt that the serpent in this scene was regarded as sacred and offerings such as milk may have been placed upon the table on which it partly rests, as in India in the present day. In a faience[34] seal from Mohenjodaro (No. D.K. 7991) we find on either side of a central figure a kneeling devotee; one of whom holds in his hands a curious tong-like object held by a tree worshipper on a few amulets.[35] Behind the worshippers are the attendant serpents.

The position of the serpent in both the cases is different; while in the former one, it is adored as a deity, while in the latter case he has to be content to serve as an attendant.

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In a faience sealing the tail of the cobra is intended to be looped round and joined on the feet of the suppliant, as it is in certain proto-Elamite monuments. However, this may be, it seems probable that the suppliant in this case is meant to be *Nāga*. The belief in the *Nāga* is unknown in the Vedic Age, but is quite prominent in the later Indian literature from the time of Sūtras onwards and the motif of *Nāgas* paying homage to a deity had been quite popular in the Indian Art.[36]

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6

Tree Worship and Forest Deities

I. TREE WORSHIP

The trees which are considered to be so essential for human life, are believed to have come into existence at least three *yugas* earlier than the emerging of the human race on earth. The early man had to live in the forest and had to meet all his requirements from the trees and plants. It is quite well known that the agriculture began when the man selected those particular wild growths which were rich in food value, sowed their seeds and protected the growing plants in his field and gardens. Removed from the dangers and struggle for existence, these plants had been able to devote more and more energy to the business of making and storing food. Thus the cultivated wheat, for instance, which was once a wild grass developed into the nice seeds and now gives the world its staple food. The process of evolution is further speeded up when humans carefully selected their seeds for each successive crops. All this has been said about the usefulness of trees and plants discussed by the respective contributors. The various forms of tree worship developed in the ancient times, because, the wild produce was everything for the early man; which provided him all the necessities of life including food, shelter, bark garments and even medicines, in order to remove the ailments. In the Neolithic times, however, when the man could learn of farming and domesticating animals, the trees and plants were still more useful for him. Gradually he developed a sense of adoration for trees and plants. The conception of tree worship developed into two classes viz., (i) worship of the trees as a part of religious practices and (ii) the adoration of tree spirits or tree demons whose propitiation degraded to the level of sorcery and incantation. These two aspects of the adoration of tree in its original form or to adore the tree spirit or tree-demon, with the passage of time were so intermingled that one could hardly be separated from the other. The scholars are divided over the subject. Either they were gods who developed from spiritual forces assumed by primitive man to be inherent in nature and gradually differentiated from less friendly powers embodied in various demons, until they came to be regarded as the ancestors or kinsmen of tree worshippers or they were ancestral spirits, once feared and trusted from their very origin of their kinsmen, whilst all the rest of minor spirits and demons were denegraded gods or the ancestral spirit enemies.

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A man's conception of the diety became more definitely anthropomorphic on the one hand and less local on the other; this primitive representation of the god in the tree underwent a change again in two directions. Firstly, an attempt was made to express more clearly, the human appearance of the god; the tree was dressed or carved in human semblence, or a mask or image of the god was hung upon or placed besides it; secondly, the god widened his territory or absorbed other local beliefs or gods. He associated himself with the tree of certain class and assumed to dwell in a particular kind of tree, which thenceforth became sacred to and symbolical of the god.

The worship of the tree was possibly the earliest form of divine ritual and was the last to disappear in the West before the advent of the Christian era. It existed long before the erection of the temples and images of gods. The influence of trees is available in many religions of the world even to this day. E.B. Tylor[1] feels that the direct and absolute tree worship may lie very wide and deep in early history of religion, but that, apart from this "there is a wide range of animistic conception connected with the tree and forest worship. The tree may be the spirit of the perch, or shelter or favourite haunt; or may serve as a scaffold or altar, where offerings can be set out for some spiritual being; or its shelter may be a place of worship set apart by nature, of some tribes the only temple, of many tribes, perhaps, the earliest; or lastly it may be merely a sacred object, patronised by, or associated with, or symbolising some divinity.

The nature of relation between man and tree was based on the solid base of their utility as well as the religion. Everything was thus sanctified on the altar of religion. In India, the trees were considered as divine ever since the forgotton epochs of the Bronze Age, and their cults are often symbolic and transcendental. While some of the steatite seals of Mohenjodaro depict tree gods either in the context of a forest or ritual, the painted pottery of Chalcolithic India often visualises apparently sacred plants, creepers, trees, leaves especially those of the holy *aśvattha* (*Ficus-religiosa*). Such elaborate delineation of plant life expresses an aesthetic mood and taste for sylvan beauty and reveals a genuine love an respect for nature. The flowers were even symbols of beauty whose fragrance could obviously bring affection. The terracotta Mother Goddess of Mohenjodaro and Harappa appear to have been adorned with fan-shaped headdress, which may be stylised variants of flowers. Like the idea of the cosmic tree contained in the Puranic literature, the Assyrians also believed in the divine tree and carved scenes of its worship by gods on a stone slab in the palace of Nimrod. The Romans and their beauty of the trees and flower beds on the other hand had given to the civilization a special enchantment, sometimes giving rise to idylic events bordering on mythology like the memory of the Garden of Eden or the reminiscences of the Hanging Garden of Babylon. While in India the divine *Nandanavana* was fondly contemplated in the paradise of India, the ancient kings often built pleasure gardens of fantastic beauty referred to in the classical Sanskrit literature. Aelian greatly admired the palace of Candragupta and observed, "In the Indian royal palace,

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where the greatest of all the kings of the country resides besides much else, which is calculated to excite admiration and with which neither Snsa or Ekhatana can vie, there are other wonders besides. In the parks, live peacocks are kept, and pheasants which have been domesticated. There are shady groves and pasture ground, planted with trees, and branches of trees which the art of woodsman has deftly interwoven; while some trees are native to the soil others are brought from other parts and with their beauty enhance the charm of landscape[2] etc."

Indeed the trees and vegetation have been occupying a very prominent place in Indian art from the earliest times, the evidence of which is available in the artefacts of the Indus valley and other Chalcolithic sites in India. While the seals of Indus valley so often depict animals or lush vegetation, however, the Puranic accounts dealt with the sanctity of the trees from different angles, when it was prescribed that the planting of the trees was an act of special merit; and some of the replicas of fruits were recommended to be made and given in charity to acquire merit. The account that follows highlights this point.

The fruit trees have their own importance in the Indian religious thought, from quite a remote past. The tradition of offering fruits to the guests has been frequently testified by the epics as well as the Puranas. The most important aspect of the Puranic literature has been to prescribe the plantation of a tree as an act of great merit. As for example, *Padma Purāṇa* spells out the merits acruing from the plantation of the mango trees:-

नाकमेति स चूतस्य समारोप्य सहस्रकम् ।
ततो द्वि त्रिगुणेनैव न्यूने वा प्रचुरऽपि वा ।।
आरोग्यं शौर्य सम्पन्नमारामादेव जायते ।
फलानि यस्य खादन्ति जन्तवोऽथ सहस्रसः ।।

Padma Purāṇa (1.60.320,34).

The *Matsya Purāṇa,* on the other hand conceives that the trees and plants cry, laugh, eject sap, drop their branches without any cause, or high wind. Some plants which are only three years old start bearing fruit and the trees start to overflow with milk, oily substance, blood, honey or water and sometimes suddenly dry up without disease. Sometimes the dried up trees begin to sprout, the fallen ones stand up and the standing ones fall down. All such symptoms forebode ill of them. There is a mention of the crying of the trees in the same text, which is believed to indicate the possible spread of an epidemic and the country on the other hand becomes annihiliated by their laughing:-

पुरेषु येषु दृश्यन्ते पादपादेव चोदिता ।
रुदन्तो व हसन्तो वा स्रवन्तो ना रसान् बहून ।।
अरोगा व विना वातं शाखां मुञ्चत्यय द्रुमाः ।

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फलं मूलं तथा कालं दर्शयन्ति त्रिहायनाः ।।
पूर्ववत्स्वं दर्शयन्ति फलं पुष्पं तथान्तरे ।
क्षीरं स्नेहं तथा रक्तं मधु तोयं स्रवन्ति च ।।
शुष्यन्त्यरोगाः सहसा शुष्का रोहन्ति वा पुनः ।
उत्तिष्ठन्तहि पतिताः पतन्तिः च तथोऽत्थिताः ।।
तत्र वक्ष्यामि ते ब्रह्मण विपाकं फलमेव च ।
रोदने व्याधिमध्येति हसने देश विभ्रमम् ।।

Matsya Purāṇa, 232.1-5.

The *Matsya Purāṇa*, in another context provides that a devotee should procure sixteen types of fruits made of gold, silver and copper and give away in charity to the eligible priests. This is possibly due to the fact that it might not be possible to procure all the fruits at one time, some of them being out of the season and as such their substitute in metal could serve the purpose. However, the above point is illustrated in the verses noted below, specifying the fruits which are recommended to be made in the gold:-

कूष्माण्ड मातुलिञ्च वार्ताकम्पनसंतङ्का ।
आम्राम्रातकपित्थानि कलिंगमथवालुकम् ।।
श्रीफलाश्वत्थवदरञ्जम्बीरं कदली फलम् ।
काश्मरन्दाडिमं शक्त्या काल द्यौतानि षोडषः ।।

Matsya Purāṇa, (96.5-6)

(The sixteen fruits which are to be made in gold according to the means of the devotee, include pumpkin, citron, egg-plant, bread-fruit, mango, hogplums, wood-apple, Indra-grain, cucumber, coconut, loity-figs, jujubes, the lemon, banana, saffron, and pomegranate).

The adoration of the tree was indeed conceived in a variety of forms during the historic period: firstly, the tree was adored as one of the gods, and this gave birth to the development of the idea of the *Kalpavṛkṣa* or *Kalpalatā,* the representation of which are available over the gateways of Bharhut, Sanchi and Amaravati. Besides, the unique specimen of *Kalpavṛkṣa* was discovered from Vidisha. Secondly, the trees were adored in the form of tree spirits or goblins. Such tree spirits find frequent mention in the Buddhist Jataka stories, where we have the benevolent as well as malignant forms of tree spirits. Thirdly, the deities were conceived to represent the trees, the earliest reference to which is available in the Vedic literature. During

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the Puranic period some of the forest deities were in adoration, a few out of numerous such examples are discussed in the account that follows:-

II. FOREST DEITIES

(i) Araṇyānī

The concept of the forest as the mother is evident from the use of the epithet Araṇyānī, the Jungle Goddess: She has been eulogised in the *Ṛgveda* as under:-

अरण्यान्यरण्यान्यसौ या प्रेव नश्यसि ।
कथा ग्रामं न पृच्छति न त्वा भीरिव विन्दतीं ।।
वृषारवाय वदते यदुपावति चिच्चिकः ।
आपटिमिरिव धावयन्नरण्यानिमहीते ।।
उत गाव इवादन्त्युत वेश्मेव दृश्यते ।
उतो अरण्यानिः सायं शकटीरिव सर्जति ।।
गामङ्गैष आह्वयति दार्वङ्गैषो अपावधीत ।
वसन्नरण्यान्यां सायमक्रुक्षदिति मन्यते ।।
न वा अरण्यानिर्हन्त्यन्यश्चेन्ना भिगच्छेति ।।
स्वादोः फलस्य जग्ध्वाय यथा कामं निपद्यते ।।
आञ्जनगन्धि सुरभि बह्वनामकृषीवलाम् ।
प्राहं मृगाणां मातरमरण्यानिमेर्वसिषम् ।।

Ṛgveda, X. 146.1-6.

(Goddess of wild and forest who seems to vanish from the sight. How is it that you do not seek the village? Are you not afraid? what time the grasshopper replies and swells the ciccika's voice, seeming to sound with tinkling bells, the lady of the wood exults. And, yonder, cattle seem to graze, What seems to be a dwelling place, or else at eve the lady of forest seems to free the wains. Here one is calling to his cows, another here has felled a tree; at eve, the dweller in the wood fancies that some body has screamed. The goddess never slays, unless some murderous enemy approaches. Man eats savory fruits and then takes even as he wills, his rest. Now I have praised the forest queen, sweet-scented, redolent of balm, the mother of all sylvan or animals till not but have stores of food.)

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(ii) Vana durgā

This is also a forest deity included in the list of Navadurgā goddesses. The texts provide eight hands for her, in the seven of which should be held the *Śankha, Cakra, Khaḍga, Kheṭaka, bāṇa, dhanuś* and *Śūla* the eighth hand being in *tarjanī mudrā.* The complexion of this kind of the goddess is said to be green like grass:-

अरिशङ्खकृपाण खेटक बाणान्सधनुश्शूलकतर्जनी दधानः ।
ममसामहिषोत्तमाङ्गसंस्था नवदुर्गा तदृशीश्रियेऽस्तु दुर्गा ।।

Āmnaya

(iii) Vindhya-Vāsinī Durgā

The goddess resides in the Vindhyas and as such could be claimed to be the forest deity. Her complexion is conceived to be bright as the lightning, should be seated on a golden lotus; should have three eyes and four arms. Two of her hands should carry a *śaṅkha* and a *cakra* and the remaining two are to be held in *abhaya* and *varada* poses respectively. She should be adorned with crescent moon the *hāra, angadas, kuṇḍalas* and other ornaments. Surrounding her should be Indra and other gods praising her. The lion, her vehicle should be made to stand near her.

सौवर्णाम्बुजमध्यगां त्रिनयनां सौदामिनी सन्निभां
शंखंचक्रवरामयानि दधतीमिन्दोः कलां विभ्रतीम ।
ग्रैवेयाङ्गदहारकुण्डलधरामाखण्डलाधैस्तुतां
ध्यायेद्विन्ध्यनिवासिनीं शशिमुखीं पार्श्वस्थपञ्चाननाम्।।

Śārdā-tilakaṁ

(iv) Kātyāyaṇī

The goddess derives her name from the fact that she emerged on earth in the *aśrama* of Sage Kātyayaṇa in the forest and was responsible for the slaying of Mahiṣāsura and other demons in the forest. As per the account provided by the *Vāmana Purāna,* "the gods having been defeated by Mahiṣāsura, forsook their abodes and hastened, with Brahmā as their head, to implore the protection of Viṣṇu. Śaṅkara was also present there, and when the gods finished relating their grievances, Viṣṇu, and at his command, Brahmā, Śaṅkara and all the gods so emitted flames of anger from their eyes and a mountain of effulgence was formed. From this mountain came forth Kātyāyanī, resplendent as thousand suns, with three eyes, with her hair black as night and with eighteen arms. To her Śiva gave a trident, Viṣṇu a disc, Varuṇa a conch, Agni a dart, Yama an iron rod, Vāyu a bow, Sūrya a quiver and arrows, Indra a thunderbolt, Kubera a mace, Brahmā a rosary and a water pot, Kālā a sword and a shield,

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Viśvakarmā a battle axe and other weapons, Himvān a lion, and other gods various arms and ornaments. Being thus armed and adorned by all gods, Kātyāyanī proceeded to the Vindhya mountains. There two *asuras* Caṇḍa and Muṇḍa, saw her and immediately hastened to their king and informed him that a most lovely goddess had singly fixed her abode on the Vindhya mountain. On hearing the high praise which Caṇḍa and Muṇḍa bestowed on the beauty of this goddess, Mahiṣāsura determined to obtain possession of her and ordered his army to be collected. He then marched to the vicinity of the mountain where the goddess was residing. He himself entered into a lofty pavilion and then sent the son of Maya to summon the goddess to his presence. Dundubhī, the son of Maya, then proceeded to her, and standing respectfully at a short distance, informed her that he was the messenger sent by Mahiṣāsura and had come with a proposal of a union with her. This was rejected by the goddess, who ultimately killed the king of demons and other *asuras*, for the sake of gods.

In the *Harivaṁśa Purāṇa,* it is said that the mother goddess living in the Vindhyas has the following of fowls, goats, rams, lions and tigers.

(v) Tree Goddess

As already brought out earlier, worship of trees and tree spirits in India is as old as the civilization itself. The animistic conceptions which have distinguished the worship of trees throughout the historic period were common in the Chalcolithic Age, are portrayed in several sealings from Harappa and Mohenjodaro. One of the most interesting of these is the one in which the epiphany of deity in the tree is portrayed in a half realistic, half conventional way. The tree itself at the right hand top corner of the seal is represented by two branches only springing from a circle on the ground, and treated in a formal fashion. Between them appears a deity; a standing nude figure, with long hair, trident horns and armlets, recalling those of the three faced image of Śiva (?). In front of the tree is a half kneeling figure of a suppliant, also with long hair, armlets and horns, but with the addition of a leaf spray or plume between the horns. Behind this suppliant is a composite animal, part bull and part goat (?) with human face, of a type commonly met with at Mohenjodaro and Harappa. In the field below in a line of seven small standing figures, with dresses reaching to the knees, with a long plait of hair falling down the back and a plume on the head (These seven dieties have also been interpreted to represent the Saptāmatrikās, one of them being Manasā). From its leaves the tree appears to be a pipal (Ficus religiosa)—a tree which is still an object of worship throughout India, which no Hindu would willingly cut or injure, and beneath the shade of which he would be reluctant to tell an untruth. This is the tree of knowledge, under which, the Buddha attained enlightenment. It was regarded as the tree of knowledge, like that of the tree of life, as in Mesopotamia and may have been equally ancient in India. The nude deity appearing between the branches is very small and crudely portrayed, but the absence of any evidence of male

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sex coupled with the fact that the tree deities in India are usually female. (Typical such examples are found on the railings of Sanchi and Bharhut in the 2nd-Ist century BC where the Yakṣī figures are portrayed standing over their animal vehicles and clasping the tree with arms and legs. Their poses indicate that they are the part and parcels of the trees). The ministrant figures, however, over this appear to be women. All these points suggest that she is a goddess rather than a god. As to the human headed composite animal standing behind the suppliant, its meaning is not altogether clear. On some other seals, whereon a similar scene is portrayed, its place is taken by a goat or other horned animal, which sometimes stands behind the suppliant, sometimes between the suppliant and the deity and which might therefore be taken as a sacrifice destined to be offered to the deity. That the animal, however is not a sacrificial one, is clearly proved by this seal, where it is of mythical composite nature[3] (Pl. 20, Fig. 24).

(vi) Worship of tree in natural form

On certain sealings from Harappa various sacred trees are represented which the artist have been at pains to differentiate one from the other, but the workmanship is too minute for the several species to be identified with confidence. It is quite interesting however, that atleast two of the trees on these sealings spring from what appears to be either an enclosing wall such as commonly encircle the roots of the sacred tree on later reliefs of the historic period and were regarded as almost indispensible symbols of their sanctity.

In Harappa and Mohenjodaro, therefore, two forms of tree worship are discernible. One in which tree itself is worshipped in its natural form, and the other in which the tree spirit is personified and endowed with human shape and human attributes. This aspect is precisely found in the sculptures of Bharhut and Sanchi and of other Early Indian Schools, but there is this difference in the later monuments in which the tree spirit appears in a subordinate role as a dryad (Yakṣī or Yoginī). In the earlier one she seems to have been already elevated to the position of an important goddess. Evidently, the tree worship was essentially a characteristic of pre-Aryan population and the tree spirit was possibly more important in pre-historic days among the people who originated the worship than it did in the Aryan India; where the tree worship invariably became subordinate to alien or semi-alien cults. Some of the numerous examples of the tree worship in Harrapan culture are brought out as follows:-

(a) An amulet from Mohenjodaro is fairly clear and depicts on the extreme right an animal with its tail carried straight up in the air which makes it reasonably certain that here is once more represented the composite animal of seals 411, 450 and 636.[4] On the left of this creature, a human being on a tree is watched by a tiger, a scene which is now quite familiar. Beyond again is a framed Svāstika and on the extreme left is an elephant.

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(b) In an amulet from Mohenjodaro at the extreme right is a horned figure with arms adorned with bracelets standing between two trees, which resemble the *Pipal* tree. On the left of this scene is a sacred goat decorated with garlands, which recalls another tree scene in which this animal appears.[5] Beyond a kneeling horned deity, apparently a goodess, for a long pigtail is worn similar to those of the figure on seal Nos. 347 and 430, holds out both hands as if in supplication. At the extreme left is a little offering table, upon which stands something not unlike a bird.

It seems that the tree spirit wears identically the same head-dress as that of the kneeling goddess, standing between two separate trees, though each has leaves only on one side. This latter fact may, however, be accounted for the confusion the foliage on both sides of their trunks would have created, with the figure between them. In case this surmise be correct, this little scene helps us in interpretation of the scene on another amulet.[6] Here two men carry a tree each with its roots showing, which may have been torn from the ground. On the contrary, they may be about to plant their trees for the abode of the tree spirit. On this amulet, there even appear to be heaps of earth around the foot of each tree, which certainly suggests that they had been newly planted, an occasion on which prayer and the table of offerings, and perhaps the sacrificial goat would be appropriate.

In seal No. 430, a tree goddess[7] or a spirit appears in a pipal tree as shown by the shape of the leaves. She stands before a kneeling worshipper behind whom stands a goat with human face. In the register below are seven ministrants or votaries, each dressed in a short kilt and wearing a long pigtail and a spray of leaves or a feather in the hair. The tree spirit is apparently nude but has a pair of horns between which is a projection which was probably intended to represent a sprig of foliage like those worn by deities on seals 222 and 235. The worshipper has a very similar head-dress and like the goddess and the seven ministrants is adorned with many bangles. The apparent object in front of the kneeling figure is merely a fracture in the seal, but beyond the foot of the tree on the right is a square partitioned receptacle very much similar to the Indus pottery dishes. This receptacle was probably intended for offerings to the goddess and it is not unlike the object in front of the buffalo on seal 279. Though no doubt the figure in the tree represents a goddess, the kneeling figure may also be a deity as the same head-dress is worn by both or it may be an ordinary human being attired in a manner that was thought to be pleasing to the goddess or alternatively, he could be the worshipper of the goddess but one of the lower degree than the one in the tree. The seven figures below may be deities of lesser rank or even the daughters of the principal deity. Their number seven is significant; for to it mystical quality is attached in India as well as in other parts of the world. The goat with a human head is certainly not a sacrificial animal. In another seal from Mohenjodaro,[8] the face is also that of a goat. The presence of this animal in this scene recalls the fact that in Europe of the classical period tree spirits were believed to take the shape of a goat or to have goat's feet.

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A rectangular clay seal from Mohenjodaro[9] contains an inscription beside the scenes on all the four sides. On side (a) a man is seated on a tree with a cat like animal looking back over its shoulder at him, a scene which frequently occurs at Mohenjodaro. On the opposite side (b) a row of animals in file, though very rubbed, can be identified as rhinoceros or elephants and a Urus bull. Above them on the left is a *gharial* or fish eating crocodile with a fish in its jaw and on the right there appears to be a bird. A third and narrower side (c) is far more interesting and though it is badly abraded, certain details are fairly clear. On the left is a tree beneath which is a small truncated pyramid like object, perhaps a shrine, surmounted by a standard, the details of which are very difficult to make out. A goat like animal with long horns and a short upturned tail stands on each side of the pyramid with its forelegs resting on its top. (The attitude of these animals is quite Sumerian in feelings).[7] Hanging from the branches of the tree are a number of objects that may represent leaves or fruits, though the seemingly sacred character of the shrine like structure beneath the tree is suggestive of offerings. (It is quite common in most parts of India to see clothings, rags etc. hung in a tree as an offering to the spirit which is supposed to dwell therein. This custom is not confined to India alone. The *pipal*[10] tree is especially revered, women making vows to it for the boon of male off springs and registering these vows by tying rags to the lower branches). In the middle of this side a kneeling man holds in both hands what may be a small sapling, that he is about to plant, while a woman standing before him bends down with what is perhaps a basket in her hands. Behind the woman is a badly weathered device of which only the lower portion remains, that appears to be the same as the figure on the left of the tiger in another seal. Further to the right are some details difficult to identify, one of which, possibly, is a dancing figure. If this is so, the middle and the right hand of this scene may depict some religious rites. The fourth side is badly rubbed.

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The Mythology

Besides the depiction of various deities in several forms in the artefacts of the pre-Harappan and Harappan Chalcolithic sites there appears some evidence of the pottery and seals in which some scenes have been depicted, which have been interpreted to portray some mythological scenes based on the contemporary religious practices and the like. These seal devices can very well be compared with the iconographic presentation of various myths associated with different religious creeds of India of the subsequent period. The account that follows, deals with a few, of the many, such devices.

Vats describes a triangular prism sealing of terracotta with a blurred legendary scene on each side. One face of this seal shows a god in standing posture; his right arm is profusely decorated but the left one is indistinct. Its second face shows tall stalwart man engaged in fighting a bison, which has been firmly caught by horns. Vats[1] observes, "The scene may be a representation of Ea-bani, fighting a bison in the jungle. The tentative explanation of the scene depicted may be correct, but the scene depicted on the third face is undoubtedly Indian in nature. The same author fully describes an oblong terracotta sealing which contains legendary scenes on both its faces; the depiction on each face probably runs from left to right. The obverse shows first of all a man attacking a tiger from a *machan* (scaffolding) erected on an acacia tree. The deity is next shown on a low Indian throne seated in a well known yogic posture; from behind his headdress, there is a long tassel like appendage to right, which reminds us of a similar object on the head of a similar figure on some Mohenjodaro seals by Mackey (cf. Nos. 222 and 235, already discussed in the chapter on Śiva of this work) of the animal to his right, the one in the enclosure may be a goat, that below the projection, a hare or a kid, and that above it, an indistinct animal with long body. The reverse side of it shows from left to right a humpless bull standing by a trident headed post, with his head bent down a little, then a standing figure, possibly a god, in front of a two storeyed structure, followed by two pictograms at the right end. The structure seems to be of wood and is of unusual interest. It looks like a combined side elevation and perspective of a double storeyed room preceded by a porch—both of open work in the front but seemingly the two storeyed room is closed by lattice work on the rear side and crowned at corner by somewhat conical finials. It

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is not certain what the bifurcated object apparently hanging down from a projection of the terrace stands for; just below it, however, is placed a domical something[2] over the porch. Vats remarks, "The structure is probably of a sacred character, and in view of the trident post and bull, which are peculiarly associated with Śiva, whose prototype has been found in Mohenjodaro, the possibility of the standing figure being ultimately identified as another form of the same god may not be ruled out."[3] The scene of what appears to be a tiger hunt is comparatively familiar in Mohenjodaro and Harappa. Marshall[4] suggests that, "such seals may have been used as protective amulets against tigers or other jungle animals." The explanation holds good according to J.N. Banerjea[5] who obserres that, "the reverse device particularly reminds one of the reverse device of certain Ujjaini Coins, in which the animals are no doubt absent, but here too is some sort of a structure with conical projection (?) as well as a trident headed post, which however is held by the right hand of the standing figure on the right side."[6] This has been interpreted as the cult deities in human form. As regards the domical object over the porch on the Harappa seal, it might be the same as realistic phallus which appears on the obverse of the same types of coins. It is to be noted that the *passim,* the figure standing by the humpless bull[7] on the Harappa seal seems to hold a long staff in his left hand and a water vessel-like object in his right one, just reminiscent of the similar figures on certain punch marked coins which have been identified as Śiva[8] and could represent some mythological scene.

The devices on two seals No. 279 and 510, of Mackay's book are of great interest for the study of mythological scenes. The former depicts a buffalo with its head so represented as to show both the rugged horns, below which an apparently partitioned feeding trough; in the extreme left corner is shown a man with his foot upon the buffalo's nose, grasping a horn with one hand and with the other about to thurst a spear with a barbed point into animal's back. This scene has been discussed in detail elsewhere in this work as portraying the subjugation of the demon Dundubhī.

Mackay's seal No. 510, shows a buffalo in a mythological scene, which seems to have attacked a number of people who are lying scattered on the ground in every conceivable position. Mackay observes, "we may perhaps see in this scene, a god or emblem of a god attacking his enemies. This is in parallel to the well known scene on the state palettes of the First Dynasty of Egypt, where the king himself in his character of a strong bull gores a prostrate enemy."[9]

On an amulet from Mohenjodaro, (DK 9281), on the left of the obverse, there is a large tree with a platform round it, exactly like a platform that are frequently built around the sacred trees of India today. To the right is an upright object, on the top of which is a pair of horns, flank what is probably a branch of a tree, a device that is seen as the headdress of the deities

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on seals 222, 235 and 420 (representing Śiva). Below the horns are two projections, one of which could be an animal's head. To the right again is a bull or buffalo, which appears to have just tossed a man over its back.[10] Possibly this animal is to be regarded as the guardian of cult object and sacred tree behind it, in which case it has effectually disposed of an intruder.[11] (Pl. 50).

In Marshall's seal No. 357, a composite human figure, with a tail and two horns over the head is found struggling with a fabulous beast, greater part of which is like a tiger with horns over the head. On seals and other objects, Enkidu is always shown struggling with a lion and his companion Gilgamesh with a bull, but it is possible that at Mohenjodaro, the tiger was substituted for the lion, which animal never appears on the seals. The treatment of the tree behind the hero is extremely realistic, both in its very careful drawing and its pleasing irregularity. One finds that such a tree could be found everywhere in India. The horns on the head of the animal, whose stripes show it to be a tiger, do not resemble those of any particular beast; without them, this would be an exceptionally good representation of a tiger, for the mouth is open, and the canine teeth are shown,[12] and could be part of a mythological story (Pl. 51).

Mackay has also published a seal from Mohenjodaro, which depicts two male figures carrying uprooted trees held by each one of them in their hands, which has been discussed elsewhere in this work. This scene has been interpreted to mean the depiction of the episode of Yamalārjuna, so commonly found in the Puranic literature (Pl 49).

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8

Forces of Nature and Their Adoration

I. THE FIRE (AGNI)

Agni, the fire-god was closely associated with Indra in the Vedic literature and is sometimes called his twin brother. The pair were most prominent deities in the Vedic times. Nearly two hundred hymns are addressed to Agni while Indra got two hundred and fifty of them. According to the Vedic conception, Indra gave the 'air of life' to men; Agni symbolized the 'vital spark,' the principle of life in animate and inanimate nature; Agni was supposed to be in man, in beast, in fish, in plants and trees, while also in the intoxicating Soma. The gods partook the nature of Agni. In one of the post-Vedic creations, he is identified with the universal soul; Brahmā is also believed to have existed in the form of Agni with which the worlds were framed and gods and man came to be. Agni was made manifest in lightning, in the celestial sun flames, in the sacred blaze rising from the altar and in homely house hold fires. The fire god was the divine priest. In Vedic invocations, there are evidences that several myths had gathered round the fascinating and wonderful fire god. One hymn refers to him as a child, whose birth was kept in secret; his mother the queen concealed him from the Sire; he was born in full vigor as a youth and was seen sharpening his weapons at a distance from his home, which he had forsaken. Sometimes he is said to have devoured his parents at birth; This seems to signify that he consumed the fire sticks from which the holy fire was produced by friction. Agni was also given ten mothers, who were twice five sisters (*Rv.* IV.6.8). But this reference is clearly explained in another passage. "The ten fingers have given him birth, the ancient well loved Agni, who was well born of his mothers."

There are various myths about his birth, forms and abode. He is daily produced from two kindling sticks (*araṇīs*) which are called his parents or mothers and therefore, he is ever young, though ancient. He is called the 'son of strength' probably because of the strength required to kindle the fire, the ten fingers (called the maidens) being exercised in the process. Agni's origin in the aerial waters is often referred to. As the son of water (*Apāṁ napāt*), he has become a separate deity. He is also said to be born in the highest heaven and was brought down from the heaven by Mātrisvān (the Indian Prometheus). This is the third origin of the celestial one. The threefold nature of Agni is a favourite topic with the composers of the *Rv*; his heads,

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bodies, stations, splendours, and births are each three fold. He is the earliest representation of the famous Indian trinity, and yet he is called as having two births (*dvi-janman*) from the point of view of the twofold division of the universe into heaven and earth.

The god of fire is thus mentioned in several other hymns, in a variety of forms, and several feats are also attributed to him in Vedic literature.

The most important assignment entrusted to Agni, the god of fire in the Vedic literature, had been his performance at the Vedic sacrifices. There Agni is conceived as a personification of the sacrificial fire. It presents in its conception the house hold life of the Vedic Aryans and is second in importance only to Indra whose conception presents their external life of struggle and conquest. The anthropomorphism of the physical appearance of Agni is naturally very slight. He is butter-backed and flame haired and eats the oblations with his tongue. Wood or ghee is his food and melted butter is his beverage, though he is invited also to drink the Soma with other gods. He is nourished three times a day. Although, he is invoked to partake in the sacrificial offerings, but he, himself, is more prominently the mouth by which the gods eat the sacrifices. His splendour is naturally the most prominent quality. He shines by the day and night. He is also called smoke-bannered (*dhuma-ketu*) and is said to be supporting the sky with his smoke as with the post. He is the charioteer of the sacrifice and brings the gods in the golden lightning car. He is said to be the son of heaven (Dyāus) and also of heaven and earth.

In the *Ṛgveda* the sacrifice is a means of influencing the gods in favour of the offerer, and it is doubtful whether in that age the conception of gods in favour was subject to control by the worshipper, if he only knew the correct means, was developed and whether the selection of the horse as a sacrifice was motivated by the belief that thereby, the swift steed—the sun—regained strength and favoured the worshipper. As regards the more systematic view of the sacrifice as a sacrament, the common meal of the priests on the sacrificial victim may only be looked upon as a bare hint in that direction because though the priests believed that this meal brought them into a special relationship with the god, who by sharing it with them acquired in part, the same nature as themselves, it is doubtful whether they deemed themselves to be consuming the victim. It may be noted in this connection that the union or the companionship with the god or with the sun is vouchsafed to those who give liberally or to those who are generous with sacrificial fees.

Though it may not be possible to speak with authenticity whether fire was worshipped as a deity in the Chalcolithic times in the country, but the Harappan as well as the post-Harappan sites have provided enough of evidence about the then prevailing practice of fire worship obviously on the pattern of the Vedic sacrifices.

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The people of the Indus and other contemporary sites not only adored the human and composite deities in various forms, but also adored the forces of nature like the fire, sun, water etc. The excavations at various sites in India stand testimony to this aspect of the people of those remote past. Fire altars, which were used for ritualistic offerings have been discovered from various sites of Harappan post-Harappan culture which include Lothal, Kalibangan and Diamabad and others. These people practiced fire sacrifices which is indicated by the discovery of a large number of shallow pits filled with ashes, charcoal and terracotta cakes. These pits are rectangular or apsidal and are built either on mud platforms or inside the houses. At Lothal they have a miniature low enclosure around and at Kalibangan a central stump in the form of a raised brick or bricks. A rectangular *kuṇḍa* lined with baked brick with bones of bovines and antlers inside, has also been found at Kalibangan. Similar rectangular enclosures of backed brick, called fire altars by the excavators have also been exposed at Lothal at public places. A terracotta ladle used in the fire sacrifices and a wooden sacrificial post near a fire altar are believed to be significant features of the fire worship. Some pits containing ashes, animal bones, and pottery, especially grey ware dishes, and in a few cases, beads and terracotta figurines of elephants are associated with Pd. II (300-200 BC) in the habitated area of Mathura. The possibility of their being some kind of ritualistic pits cannot be ruled out. In the Śaka-Kuṣāṇa period of the same site has been found a pit containing the ashes and the animal bones below the basal fillings of the inner mud-fortification. It may have some ritualistic connection with the construction of the mud rampart. Besides performance of the Vedic sacrifices is reported from Kausambi, which dates back to 3rd century B.C. The fire altar at Jagatgram stands testimony to the performing of *aśvamedha* sacrifice in 3rd century A.D. by a king Silavarman.[2]

It would thus be evident that the fire worship which was initiated during the time of Harappan people, continued in some form or the other upto the historical period and furthur down to the modern times. It would, however, be of some interest to quote the views of the excavators of a few sites in this regard.

(i) Lothal

Lothal has brought to light new religious rites observed by the Harappan people in Kathiawar. Some of the houses in Block A of the Lower Town[3] had rectangular and circular pits cut into the floor and lined with mud plaster, while in others rectangular enclosures were built on mud-brick altars. These shallow pits and enclosures are found to contain ash, burnt earth and occasionally a few pot-sherds. The absence of any opening for supply of fuel and their unusual size and shape suggest that they could not have served as ovans. All the mud-brick altars excepting one, noticed in private houses are rectangular on plan and measure, on an average, 1 ft. 6 inches x 1 ft, while the circular pit is 1 ft. 6 inches in diameter. Two altars

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noticed in streets and assignable to phase III-A are enclosed by burnt brick walls built on raised platform of mud bricks.

The mud brick altars are six to eight inches deep and the walls of two or three courses of bricks, whereas the burnt brick altar in street-1, has twelve courses. The floors of the walls of altars are usually mud plastered. The burnt brick altars contained terracotta spheroid and oval balls, triangular cakes and burnt clay lumps besides ash and pot-sherds. A terracotta laddle found in close proximity to the altar in street 9 and bearing smoke marks suggests that it was used for pouring a liquid into the fire. Obviously, the circular and rectangular altars have been built for ritualistic worship of fire.[4]

The earliest evidence of the fire worship at Lothal comes from a house (Str.12) assignable to Phase II. In phase III however, a fire altar of burnt bricks was built in a public place. One such altar built in street 9 and described previously must have been used for communal fire worship. Whether this particular structure was used merely for offering milk to fire as in the *agnihotra* or for performing a sacrifice as in the *Darśapūrnamāsā* is not very clear. In the absence of any animal remains or the objects normally associated with the animal sacrifices, it must be presumed that the fire altar was meant for communal fire worship.

Two fire altars with rectangular walls of mud bricks assignable to phase IV were found alongwith two sturdy water pots in SRG-2. The hall of altars in the said house may represent *Agniśālā* referred to in the *Atharvaveda* (IX.3.7). Another circular enclousre built in the vicinity of the same house was also used for ritualistic purposes.[5]

The total absence of fireplaces in the Acropolis in phases I to III suggests that the people were fond of the Acropolis and did not observe fire worship. It is only after the Acropolis ceased to be the seat of power that a mud-brick altar for fire worship came to be built in a rickety house of a craftsman in phase IV. An inference that may be drawn from these facts is that no state religion involving fire worship or animal sacrifice existed in phases II and III. Had political authority been based on religious sanctions, the ruler would have built impressive temples of fire worship or animal sacrifices in the Acropolis, especially when the common man of lower Town had altars built for such purposes. In phase IV, however, communal fire worship appears to have come into vogue in the lower town side by side with domestic fire worship. At Kalibangan too a row of fire altars with central stumps has been found. In this connection mention may be made of an oval enclosure with a central stump in a house in a Block at Lothal site which resembles the fire altars in Kalibangan. Fire altars must have existed at Harappa and Mohenjodaro as well but have possibly been missed. One fire altar was found at Amri and another at Rangpur.[6]

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(ii) Diamabad

One of the most interesting aspect of the excavations at Diamabad, had been the discovery of fire altars two of which have been described by the excavator,[7] as under:-

> "About 80 cm west of the soakpits and 60 cm north of the mud-platform was the apsidal Fire Altar. This consisted of an apsidal clay wall, burnt red due to contact with fire, resting over a horse shoe shaped platform of hard clay 1.3 m long and lying almost paralled to the mud platform. The northern arm of the clay was 18 cm broad and the southern 25 cm., the end of both being rounded. The length of the space inside the apsidal structure was 1.05 m. The entire structure was covered with a thick layer of ash and as such it was thought that it represented a hearth and it was designated as Hearth in layer 6. After removal of the ash, however, the structure was exposed. It yielded a vast quantity of charred and semi-charred animal bones, pot-sherds, charred grains of wheat, Barley, Ragi, Lentil, horse-gram, grass pea, Saugandha Bela, cheno/Arms and Ber."

> Beyond the Apsidal Fire Altar, towards west, was a unique religious structure called Apsidal Sacrificial Temple[8] facing south, with a low mud step, 2 cm high, 70 cm long and 24 cm broad placed a little obliquely at the entrance and a post-hole 20 cm in diameter on the east. The apsidal mud wall of this temple with its plastered top was 5-10 cm high and 20 cm broad. It was little cut on the outside by later two pits on the north. The inside measured 2.6 m long and one meter broad. At the apse was circular mass of dark brown clay with raised sides, abutting the inner face of the mud wall, inside of which was a fire pit, 55 cm. in diameter. At the edge of the fire pit was embedded a stone stump, roughly rectangular in cross section and coated with the thick coat of clay which was burnt red due to contact with fire in the fire pit and the stone stump, towards south of which was found placed a small cylindrical unbaked object. Towards east, over the wall and partly inside, was another circular mass of dark brown or black clay, 45 cm in diameter, apparently meant for coating the stone stump. To the west of it was a circular depression, a pot-rest, 30 cm in diameter, as was indicated by the fragments of a base of pot of Malwa ware inside. Besides this, there were nine pot rests, varying in size. From inside this temple were recovered charred remains of wheat, barley, lentil, *ragi,* beans, and *chenao.*

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II. THE SUN

(i) The Primitive ideology

Of the various natural forces influencing the human as well plant life beside other creatures in the universe since many ages, the sun happens to be one of them. It is a stationary body and is the foremost of the planets. The knowledge of the movement of the heavenly bodies was possessed by the most primitive people in varying degrees. In the early stages of civilization, which is the foundation of the primitive astronomy, was not possible, through lack of proper means of recording its results, nor is it called by the practical requirements of a population which chiefly lived by hunting. With the advance of the civilization to agricultural stage, the fore-knowledge of recurring seasons became essential and some means to mark the proper seasons for carrying on the activities to ensure regular food supply for the need of the hour. In the sun and other planets, or stars, with their regular motion of rising and setting early man found the earliest and the most convenient calendar. In the absence of a theory based on a series of observations, the supposed movement of the sun round the earth, the phase of the moon and the motion of the stars, the shape and character of the sky have been explained by the formula composed of the material drawn from the texture of man's religious beliefs. The celestial body, with its material surroundings was considered by man to be animated with personality like his own, though more powerful in many spheres. Man, therefore, created some ideological forms, initially based on sun's natural features like the sun discs or the semi-circular orb of the sun. But with the passage of time man fashioned for himself, in the legendary tales, a fairly complete explanation of the celestial phenomena based on his own observations.

Gradually, the sun and other planets were conceived in human form. But this concept or ideology became popular at quite a late stage. In almost all the primitive societies of the globe, the sun and the moon were conceived in human form or in quasi-human nature. Though this ideology developed at quite a late stage possibly earlier than the historical period. Their sex differed among the different races, but the moon is more commonly the male and the sun a female. Relations between them, though varying in character are also recognised. Among the Diars of Australia, the sun is conceived to be the daughter of a Diere woman, who after her birth sank into the earth in shame. The natives of Encounter Bay believe that the sun is a woman who has a lover among the dead. Each night she descends among the dead. At her rising, she appears in red kangaroo skin given to her by her lover. A Wotjobaluk legend relates the sun to be a woman, who reached west; while wandering round the earth, she came back to the other side and has done the same ever since.[9]

The sun, according to the primitive thought in general, did not cross the sky in the same leisurely manner as at present. According to some legends, the great feat of Maorihero was

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that he tamed the sun. He beat him so severely that the sun was lamed as a result of which the latter walked slowly ever since then. In Samoa, the sun had a child by a Soman woman who trapped the sun by a rope made of wine. Another woman loosened the sun and made him to promise for going slow. The same or an analogous explanation is found in an Aztec folklore and in Noth America. On the other hand in Australia and Malaysia, the sun did not set. In the myths of the origin of Victoria, Norralie decided that the sun should disappear at intervals and addressed him an incantation, "Sun burn your wood, burn your internal substance and go down." "Thus according to this legend, the sun burns his fuel in the day and goes below for fresh firewood."[10] For sunset two different explanations were given. The first one is that the sun sinks into a hole from which he rises. The Dieri say, it sinks into a hole near the lake Egre and in the night, travels underground to the east in the same manner as it was believed to do in the ancient Egyptian belief. Quite frequently the sunset myth takes the form of a legend of a personal hero plunging into the body of a personal night.

The adoration of the sun was quite in vogue with the primitive societies of India, and with some of them it is still a living faith. These tribes having belief in the sunworship can be divided into two distinct categories, viz., Kolarians and Dravadians, while the other group includes tribes like Khonds, Gonds, Oraons and Todas.

The Gonds used to worship the sun-god and even human sacrifice was offered to please him. It used to be in the form of a feast in which the cult of fertility had its own importance. The Khonds worshipped the sun as the prime divinity. They believed in one supreme god, in the form of the sun, who created the wife Tari—the goddess of Earth, the source of evil, while the sun-god was kindly and benevolent. Tari tried to prevent Bella-Pennu—the sun-god from creating man. Then the dark goddess planted the seed of evil in man and death came to the latter. The sun-god was victorious but Tari continued her evil designs on man. According to their belief there are four kinds of fates for a man after death. One of these is that the soul goes to the sun. The chief feast of the sun-god is *Salo-Katho* which resembles the *soma*-feast. According to another belief with these primitive people, the sun-god created all inferior deities. Some of the Khonds worship the sun-god, some of them the earth-goddess and ascribe to her all success and power. The Kols like Khonds worship the sun, but with the moon as his wife and stars as his children. With the Santhals too the adoration of the sun is quite common. In the wedding ceremonies, a cock and a hen are sacrificed in honour of the sun-god.

(ii) Early sun-symbols

Johannes Moringer,[11] while discussing on the religion of the pre-historic people, observed that a widespread cult of the sky and the sun was one of the characteristic features of the Neolithic farmers in Eruope. With the Ethnographic accounts, Tylore[12] came to the similar conclusions. He observed that the sun is not so evidently the god of the wild hunters or of

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fishers, as of the tillers of the soil; who watch him day by day, giving or taking away their wealth or their very life. As regards the prevalance of the sun cult in the pre-historic times, it is rather difficult to be so categorical as Moringer is about Europe, due to the paucity of available material on the subject. However, on the Neolithic pottery of Piklihal,[13] there is a depiction of an encircled sun. Besides this, other convincing evidence pertaining to the presence of the sun-cult during the pre-historic times is wanting. In India, the direct and indirect evidence of the solar worship is available in the pre-historic rock paintings. With the dawn of the farming economy, the importance of the sun as the source of light, fertility, energy and the rains must have been recognised by those people and then deity was depicted in the rock art. In the paintings in the rock-shelters in Singanpur[14] (Rajasthan), there is the representation of the rising sun with seven rays pointed towards the sky. Below the rising sun, there is a human figure, which appears to be in the posture of worship. A singular representation of the rising sun is found on another rock painting from the same site. Seven rays emanate from the sun, in this case as well, which have been interpreted to be seven horses of the sun. At Sita-kordi in the Chambal valley, the sun appears in full radiance[15] over the rock paintings. These representations are of two types viz., the circles with radiating rays and a circle with radiating rays, encircled by a bigger circle.

Similar representations of the sun have been reported from Pala Pinta de-carlao in Portugal[16] and Iberian peninsula.[17] At Kobra Pahar, there are some wheel-like designs on rock paintings, which have thirty-six spokes.[18]

The solar symbols[19] were discovered on the beads from Mohenjodaro and Mackay has observed on the subject as under:-

"Possibly, these beads are solar devices and they almost exactly resemble some of the round motifs on pottery. They were likely regarded as possessing amuletic powers, and doubtless on account of their blue colour as efficacious against the evil eye. I have myself seen in Bagdad a cog-wheel bead not at all unlike those from Mohenjodaro attached to a motor as a mascot. Sometimes similar beads are known from pre-dynastic Egypt, and there is a dark blue bead with a notched edge from Ur, but undated, in the Bagdad Museum. Five painted star shaped beads are well known from the Twelfth Dynasty of Egypt and a seven-pointed marble bead from Encolithic period has been found at Ramedello, Italy." The same author has testified the presence of the forms of solar symbols in the Indus valley artefacts as follows:-

"The urus-like animal or more probably the divinity[20] of which the animal was a symbol, may have been a solar deity. There is a sun-disc in which rays are shown as emerging on seal No. 641 and in Pl.C (a) in which the head of this beast takes the place of sixty rays. Possibly this motif represents sun, and if so, it is of considerable importance, for with the

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exception of some doubtful representations on pointed pottery (Pl. LXVIII 21 & 24), neither the sun, the moon nor the stars appear anywhere in the art of the ancient Indus valley, though such devices frequently occur on the early seals and painted pottery of Sumer and Elam. Nowhere has any pictured representation of an animal so intimately connected with the sun-disc as on this seal and the peculiarly shaped disc itself without the animal is rarely seen. It could possibly be compared with what appears to be a solar disc on a vase of the Bukk Culture (Dannubian-I) and also with a figure, but with four arms only, on an ivory seal of E.M.III date from Knossos.[21] The sun is also represented in a somewhat similar manner on a pottery from Kish and on similar seals from Susa.[22] These sun symbols became stylised at a later date into the form seen on the early Cappadocian and Macadonian pottery, where the rays are hook like in form and are more numerous " (Pl. 43).

It is possible that the inhabitants of the early Indus valley, an agricultural people, did not pay that attention to the stars, which is a distinguishing feature of the religions of the agrarian populations.

(iii) Chanhudaro

These very striking sun motifs, which were so popular with the peolpe of Chanhudaro[22] and are so abundantly seen in the pottery from the site, are not represented at Mohenjodaro and rarely occur on the wares of the contemporary date from other excavated Harappan sites. They take various forms and position on the pottery. Especially prominent specimens are available on sherds and its use as a repitition motif in wide borders is also available. The centre of the device is either a plain circle with a spot in the middle or an annulus divided into four quarters each one of which is filled-in with some form of ornamentation.[23] The rays issuing from the centre may be either straight with oblique ends[24] or set at a tangent,[25] the last being by far the most common. Each ray terminates in a leaf like form, pipal leaves having been used.[26] This combination of plant form and orb perhaps symbolises the close connection between vegetation and sunshine, and the tangential forms successfully convey a belief that the sun was a rotating body. As in the case of Svāstika, the direction of the revolution, whether clockwise or anti-clockwise, did not trouble the artist.

The solar motif is hardly to be seen in the pottery from Harappa and Mohenjodaro, but something akin to it has been found carved on a seal. This is a six rayed object with one ray terminating in the head of a horned animal.[27] A sun symbol with seven rays, each ray terminating in a pipal leaf and closely resembling the emblem appears on one side of a faience sealing from the excavations at Harappa. Very elaborate and complex examples of the same motif combined with leaves and buds were used in the South as well as in Bengal even in recent times to decorate the thresholds and floors on special festive occasions. They also occur on the ancient punch-marked coins (Pls. 52-58).

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Further a seven rayed object with spatulate ends is painted on the inside of a bowl from Arpachiyah, dated to the late Tell Halaf Period. The same symbol also occurs on an early steatite seal from Crete, but here bull-like appendages take the place of leaves at the end of the rays.[28]

No examples of this radiant form of Sun-disc appear on Sumerian or Elamite pottery, though it is known on Sumerian seals from Tell Asmar and Kish and again on seals from Susa. In Egypt, buttons belonging to the period covered by Ninth to Twelfth dynasties, bear this motif and very curious form of it, not found elsewhere, may be seen in the pre-dynastic bowl. It appears appropriately enough on the ceilings of tombs at Thebes. In Crete these radiant sun motifs are carved on Early and Middle Minoan seals, besides being painted on pottery. In Baluchistan, the symbol is frequently found on certain funerary wares from Shahi-tump, but these may be of later date than the Harappa ware from Chanhudaro.

III. THE WATER

In the Vedic literature, though Varuṇa is not regarded as the god of ocean, as he is in the later writings, but rather as the god of light, yet there are passages which describe him as being connected with the waters of atmosphere and on the earth, which afford some foundation for the later conceptions of his kingdom (for being the god of waters). Thus for instance we read, "May the waters which are celestial and those which flow; those for which channels are dug and those which are self produced; those which are proceeding to the ocean, and are bright and purifying preserve me. May those waters in the midst of which Varuṇa goes...preserve me". In other places he is said to dwell in the waters as Soma does in the woods.

In the aforesaid passage it is recognised that water has the quality to purify the people. This aspect becomes apparent in the daily life of a householder, who requires water for keeping everything in the house absolutely neat and clean, even his own self, by the use of water. Indeed the sense of cleanliness goes alongwith the use of water. This type of use and the sanctity of the water was well known to the Indus valley people. Of the sanctity of water in abstract, no tangible evidence has been found, but water was held by the Indus people in great reverence and that it played a highly important part in the daily life and religion of the citizens of Mohenjodaro. This aspect is demonstrated by the eleborate bathing establishments. The great bath at Mohenjodaro was a vast hydropathic establishment and the most imposing of all the remains unearthed there. Its plan is simple; in the centre, an open quadrangle with verandahs on its four sides and at the back of the three of the verandahs are the various galleries and the rooms; on the south, there is a long gallery with a small chamber in each corner; on the east, a single range of small chambers, including one with a well; on the north a group of several halls and fair sized rooms. In the midst of the open quadrangle is a large

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swimming bath some thirty-nine feet in length and twenty-three feet in width and about eight feet deep, with flight of steps at either end, and at the foot of each, there was a low platform for the convenience of the bathers, who might have otherwise found the water to be too deep. The bath was filled from the well in chamber and possibly from other wells besides and the waste water was carried off through a covered drain near south west corner, the corbelled roof of which is about six and a half feet in height.[29]

Indeed it is safe to affirm that in no city of antiquity was so much attention paid to this matter of bathing as in Mohenjodaro. The practice was firmly rooted with the people possibly as a matter of religious belief. That the emphasis should have been laid on bathing—even at that remote age—will not come as a surprise to anyone familiar with the importance that from the time immemorial, the Indian society had attached to ceremonial ablution in sacred tanks, pools and rivers. Every pious Hindu used to start the day with bathing preferably in a running stream, or failing that in a pool or tank or even a private bath, since it is only by such bathing that the sins of the day could be washed away, while to bathe in a holy pool like that of Puṣkara absolves one of every sin committed since birth. But though water is holy, in the eyes of the Hindus and is able to cleanse from material and spiritual pollution, it does not follow that it was worshipped as a personal deity. On the contrary, the sanctity that attaches to it by reasons of its cleansing power needs to be distinguished from the deification and worship of rivers. The Gaṅgā and Yamunā are both personified and are worshipped on occasions. There were some cults in India which worshipped the rivers. This worship could have come down to present times from pre-historic people.

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9

Svāstika

This is an auspicious mark which is believed to be an *Oṁkāra* symbol, the fire cross, the sun symbol, a symbol for the Buddhas and the Siddhas, the crossing of the arms, or the meeting place of the four roads.

As to the origin of the Svāstika symbol, a number of theories have been propounded by the scholars but according to H.K. Deb (JASB-Vol.XVII, p. 229 ff) and several others, the Svāstika symbol is associated with the mystic syllable 'Oṁ' The syllable in Sanskrit consists of three letters a, u, m, which are variously connected with the gods of creation, preservation and destruction, as well as with the Vedas, the *Ṛg, Yajuh* and *Sāma.* But the sound 'O' of the mystic symbol is represented by a single letter, which in the Brāhmī script looks exactly like one arm ( ) of Svāstika figure ( ) and the nasal sound 'ṁ' is represented in Brahmi by a small circle or a dot with two ear-like projections ( ) which later on is shown by the dot only, with or without crescent line below ( ). 'O' in grammar is stated to be a long vowel and it is held, that in pronouncing the mystic syllable, the 'O' sound is lengthened by repetition and that the repetition is indicated in writing by two O's like a conjointed letter by placing them cross-wise. And the nasal sound 'ṁ' which is necessary in order to have a pause after a vowel sound, is indicated by a dot like mark at the ends of Brāhmī 'O' symbol. Thus dot-ending Svāstika figure is seen in numerous instances in Cunnighams coins of India and in Rapson's *Coins of Andhras.* In fact this dot or a slight projection from the ends makes the Svāstika figure more ornamental.

In case the identification of Svāstika with the 'Oṁ' syllable or the development of the former out of the latter be accepted, three points would further need consideration. First the auspicious character of the Svāstika figure will get support because the 'Oṁ' syllable like the Svāstika figure is used at the commencement of something auspicious. The prefacing of 'Oṁ' in pronouncing anything is followed to this day by '*Svasti*' (good-luck) and it is also the practice to add '*Svasti*' immediately after 'Oṁ' in order probably to clarify or to emphasize the meaning of the mystic syllable. Secondly if the formation of the Svāstika figure by the joining of the two Brāhmī O's in a cross-wise manner be accepted, a very great antiquity can safely be attached to this classic symbol, because the title Brāhmī implies its origin from

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Brahmā or the creator himself and the Brāhmī alphabets could be associated with the writings of Harappa and Mohenjodaro dating back to 3000 B.C. Despite various other theories, the indigenous origin of Brāhmī can hardly be questioned although the history of its origin is still shrouded in mystery. Thus, the Indian origin of the Svāstika is further vouchsafed by the etymology of the term which is undoubtably Sanskrit and Indian.

While examining the extensive use of Svāstika figure in Indian life and culture, it would be desirable to notice briefly its antiquity and use in other countries. Thomas Wilson in his book on Svāstika referred to the various objects of different countries, whereupon the Svāstika mark has been found (Report of the Smithsonian Institution, 1894). He has largely referred to the various objects of different countries whereupon the Svāstika marks have been found. The earliest undoubted reference of the Svāstika is said to be in connection with the third city on the site of Hissarlik which has been identified with ancient Troy. It is common also in the Fourth and Fifth cities on the same site and is principally found there on spindle whorls, dating approximately from fourteenth to thirteenth century B.C. It is, however, a remarkable fact that this Svāstika was not found in the First and the Second cities, but emerged in a variety of forms in the Third or the burnt city. This fact clearly indicates that Svāstika was foreign to Troy and that it was imported and introduced there about the middle of the second millenium B.C. Its importation from Vedic India is indicated by Dr. Winkler's discoveries at Boghaz Kuei. It has been established by C.H.W. Johns (Ancient Assyria, 1912, p. 34), that by about 1400 B.C., kings with Indo-Aryan names and worshipping Vedic gods were ruling the region of Mittanni. The name Sutarna, Dushratta etc., have distinctly an Indo-Aryan appearance. In this connection ample evidence has been secured which goes on to show that there was an intimate inter-communication at that period amongst the different peoples inhabiting Asia Minôr, Egypt and the Aegian Island so that the Vedic religion obtaining in Mittani had many opportunities for circulation abroad. Earlier still, Mittani, had been the centre of an extensive empire and the migration of the *Svāstika*[1] symbol to Troy in those days is intelligible enough.

In Greece, Svāstika appeared on the archaic pottery ascribed to the period between 700 to 500 B.C. The Svāstikas composed of four small squares (卐) and the archaic cross type (卍) are found on old Greek coins and as an ornamental device on early Greek pottery in Somos, Cyprus and Hisarlik. It is also found in early Latin, Etruscan and Sicilian ornaments, coins and pottery, as well as in Asia Minor and North Africa, especially when there were several hundred bracelets which appear to have been worn as amulets or medals, bear the Svāstika mark drawn both ways. Thus the use of Svāstika symbol has been quite popular in the countries of Asia as well as Europe.

The cradle land of Svāstika had been a question of discussion with the scholars. According to a school of thought, the Svāstika or flyflot is one of the most ancient symbols mankind had

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patronised. Much is heard of it now-a-days, and in one country much is seen of it; where it is presumed to be especially connected with Aryans, and with the Christian faith as the national possession and discrimination. 'Rise of a Benign Power,' or lucky time is the meaning attached to it in Germany, while it is supposed to have a German origin and an anti-Semetic signification. Wherever the sign came from, it did not come from Germany and is also not the symbol of Aryan race. It was not invented by European people also. It is on record that centuries before the adoption of the symbol in Europe, the people of Indus valley very well knew it and it was quite popular with them. This is evidenced from the excavations at Harappa and Mohenjodaro. Europe, it seems, knew nothing of the sign until a thousand years later than the date of the specimens found in large numbers in the Indus valley.

In India, the Svāstika symbol is quite popular equally with the Hindus, Buddhists and Jainas. The Jainas call Svāstika as 'Sathis'. They give it the first place among the eight chief auspicious symbols of their faith. The Hathi Gumpha Inscription from cave No. 7, in Udaigiri, testifies on the authority of Yatis, that the Jainas believe it to be the figure of Siddha, who is beyond the four conditions of life, viz., to become after death, according to one's action in life, a god, or to go to hell or to be born again as a man or a lower animal. The Siddha is represented by Svāstika in this way. The point (*bindu*) in the centre from which the four paths branch out, is *Jīva* or life and the four paths symbolise the four conditions of life. But a Siddha is free from all these. The end of each life is turned to show that the four states are closed to them.

The Buddhists appear to hold the Svāstika symbol in the same light as the Jainas. In Nasik Inscription (No.10) of Uṣavadatta, the symbol is placed immediately after the word Siddhaṁ, a juxta position which corroborates the Jaina interpretation. The Svāstika appears at the beginning or end or at both ends of an inscription and it might seem like Brahmanical Svasti or Jaina Siddhaṁ. The Buddhist square Pali inscriptions from Kuda, Karle, Sailawadi, Jonar etc, among the inscriptions from the cave temples of the western India, contain Svāstika at the beginning and end.[2]

In modern times it is a favourite ornamental device. It is found in buildings, covering ceilings, cornices and other iron, silver, gold and wood works. It is used not only as an auspicious mark and an auspicous symbol for the Buddha and the Siddhas, but also as a sign for the crossing of the arms and the meeting of the four roads. It has also been translated into a sitting posture.

In the *Śilpaśāstras* it has been elaborately worked out in the town planning and village schemes, in designing screens, joinery work, windows, pavilions, halls and multistoreyed buildings, in digging wells, or carving the phallus or the emblem of Śiva. The *Mānsāra*[3] contains elaborate Svāstika plan for villages. The references are further elaborated in the general literature. For instance, the *Bṛhat-Saṁhitā* (Ch. LIII, 34 ff) contains a technical

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reference to a Svāstika house. The Svāstika structure is considered to be auspicious if it has the entrance on the east and the continual terrace along the west side. The octagonal buildings of Svāstika plans are described in the *Agni Purāṇa* (Ch. CIV. VV. 20-21) and the *Garuḍa Purāṇa* (Ch. XLVII, VV. 21, 23, 31-33).

According to *Kāmikāgana* (xxxv.89 ff), the distinguishing features of a Svāstika house are six eyes in the right and left and four eyes on the two sides and in front. Further details have been elaborated in the *Mānasāra, Agni Purāṇa, Garuḍa Purāṇa* and *Bṛhatsaṁhitā.*

The foregoing account, elaborates the use of Svāstika in the ancient building activity, but some people consider Svāstika to denote the invention of fire drill, and preserve the sacred remembrance of the discovery of fire by rotating a peg in dry wood. It represents according some scholars, two pieces of wood laid cross-wise, one upon another, before the sacrificial altar, in order to produce the holy fire. In such case, the ends of the cross were fixed down by arms, and at the point where two pieces are joined, there was a small hole in which a wooden peg was rotated by a cord of cowhair and hemp till the sacred spark was produced. The invention of the firedrill would mark an epoch in human history.

Another aspect of Svāstika figure is that it symbolizes the idea of circumambulation, derived from the apparent movement of the sun from left to right round the earth. The idea seems to be that if a person faces the east at sunrise and follows its movement south wards and westwards, he will turn with his right hand fixed towards an object supposed to be placed like the earth in relation to the sun in the centre of a circle. The arrangement therefore amounts to this : that as the figure of Svāstika is found scattered through countries reaching from Japan to England, so also the custom of turning sunrays or with the sun, is equally widespread, and secondly that as the Svāstika is the sign of good luck, as signified by its etymology, so also the practice of turning with the sun is considered lucky or fortunate; proceeding and turning in the contrary way, especially among the northern people is dreaded as entailing a curse. The custom and the symbol therefore are correlated (Figs. 49, 50).

Tracing the presence of Svāstika symbol in the antiquarian remains in India, one has to refer to the excavated material available from the Indus sites commonly known as Chalcolithic sites (Pls. 59 & 60). The most prominent among them is Mohenjodaro and the Svāstika has been found projected there in amulets and beads etc. besides the pottery seals. A few of such examples are given below:-

Amulets and beads

(i) On the extreme of an amulet, there is an animal with its tail carried right[4] up in the air, which makes it reasonably certain that a composite animal is represented. On the left of

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this creature, there is a human being in a tree watched by a tiger. Beyond that is a framed Svāstika and on the extreme left is an elephant.

(ii) A square amulet has a perforated[5] boss at the back to suspend it on a cord. On the face, there is a Svāstika within a square frame with a line projecting inwards from the middle of all the four sides.

(iii) On a faience amulet of yellow[6] paste, there are traces here and there of light blue glaze and a Svāstika device on the obverse.

(iv) Svāstika is found stamped over an amulet, the reverse of which bears the impression.

(v) A most interesting bead amulet[7] has an irregular hole, roughly bored from both sides. On one side there are inscribed Svāstikas (arranged counter-clockwise) and a coil pattern not unlike the one on the pottery amulet and a twist pattern of the seal of Lugal-anda, of Lagash. There can be no doubt that this twist motif had some religious or talismanic significance, especially as it is associated with Svāstika,[8] the sign of luck.

Besides Mohenjodaro, Svāstika symbol has been found in other Harappan sites including Chanhudaro and others. Incidentally it may be stated that the Svāstika[9] symbol has been variously used in several countries of the universe, but a most astonishing use has been noticed in a lead female figure found in the burnt city of Troy, belonging to 1800-1300 B.C. where in the symbol appears in the pelvic triangle of the figure, which remains inexplicable.

H.G.M. Murray-Aynsley has however, provided the Svāstika symbols from various countries, in vogue in the ancient past, according to which the figure represents the Hindu form of this symbol; fig. 2 is the Buddhist and Jawa form; fig. 3 is on a fragment of a Persian carpet preserved in the Museum at Gothenburg in Sweden; fig.4 is a mark on the Japanese pottery and fig. 5 on porcelain made only for magistrates in China. Figs. 6, 7, 10 and 11 are examples from Dr. Schliemann's Ilium. Fig. 8 is on a marble slab preserved in the Museum at Naples which was found in the Christian catacombs beneath the city and fig. 9 is the representation of *Trinacria* or three legged man of the arms of Sicily. In the Manx-man, the face and the (? sun's) rays of *Trinacria* have disappeared, only the three legs remain. Doubtless, both have a common origin and are but an outcome of the *Triskele* which was itself a debased form of the *Svāstika*. Fig. 12 is taken from the fragment of a pottery found in what is believed to be a pre-Etruscan cemetery at Bologna in Italy F-49, 50.

The row of the *Svāstika*[10] warriors and the mythical animal have in this example, to all appearance, been stamped on clay, while it was yet soft.

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2. *Indian Antiquary,* XV, p. 96.
3. *Mansara,* Ch. IV. 3. 330; XII, 73-76 etc.
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5. *Ibid.*, p. 365.
6. *Ibid.,* p. 361.
7. *Ibid.,* p. 362.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 523, P1.XC-23 (a).
9. Nagar, S.L., *The Universal Mother,* p.50, F-83.
10. *Indian Antiquary,* Vol. XV, pp. 94-95.

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10

Epilogue

The preceding chapters deal with the presence of the cult dieties available in the country from the pre-historic times to the start of the historical period. The earliest period is known as age of Pre-history, which according to H.D. Sankalia is the history of a region, a country, a nation, a people or a race, before it took to or knew writing. This evidence, unlike the ordinary history is not based on the accounts of contemparary or later writers. The period has therefore been defined as an account of the illiterate or the pre-literate people. The question then would arise as to how the history of such illiterate people or the country could be known. In order to ascertain this, one has to depend on anything that may shed light on its past history—language, place names, the study of the physical features of the people and their customs. Vegetation and the animals may also help to illustrate the story of all these people, besides their customs, manners, and their monuments. Even the study of land forms, soil and vegetations and the animals may help to illustrate the story of all these people of the bygone days. Besides several other sources like language and linguistics, ethnography and ethnology, geology and the physical anthropology, flora and fauna could also shed some light on the history of the people of the remote past.

Of all the sources detailed above archaeology is the main and more dependable a source to provide an authentic account of such people's history. Archaeology indeed is the study of antiquities. These may belong to the historical period and may fall into the sphere of historical archaeology and the others to the period beyond that. In this case too the period which is anterior to the history period is generally called as the period of pre-history and it suites well for the countries like Africa, Australia, England, France and Germany, for example, where, except for some legends and traditions, there was no systematic body of the oral traditions or literatures. India forms a major exception to this general definition. Here, though no regular written accounts of the pre-historic people, are available until the middle of the third century B.C., still it has a well-developed literature—the Vedas and the Sūtra literature—the earliest of which goes back to about 1500 B.C. or even beyond. This literature has been the source of Indian history but since it was not written down it is called proto-history.

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Likewise the Indus valley or the Indus valley civilization commonly known as the Harappan culture, though has been considered by scholars to belong to pre-history, should normally form under protohistory. For firstly, their authors were not illiterate as is amply demonstrated by their seals and they should not be blamed or termed as illiterate, in case we are unable to decipher the script convincingly (The scholars have tried to interpret these writings variously in the past). Secondly this civilization is one of the main sources of the Brahmanism of the subsequent times as well as the modern day Hinduism. In two-fold way the Indus civilization or the Harappan culture could be convincingly taken to belong to the proto-historic times. Thus the proto-history in India would include various Chalcolithic sites which were contemporary with and sometimes immediate successors of the Harappan culture. The pre-historic Archaeology in Indian context relates to the period where no legend, no tradition or other conclusive evidence could be forthcoming and one had to depend for the history of that period mainly on stone or bone implements, the remains of animals or rock paintings etc. The pre-historic as well as the proto-historic (Chalcolithic) sites in India have preserved to a considerable extent the evidence of the cult deities adored in the bygone days which throw floodlight on their religious beliefs, some of which indeed have travelled down to modern times in a variety of forms.

Though the evidence of the pre-historic period about the contemporary religious beliefs has been few and far between, but there is evidence from the Belan Valley, which has been claimed to represent the Mother Goddess in bone (but this has been contested by others). Of course, the pre-historic rock shelters of Bhimbetaka near Bhopal also depict pregnant female figurines painted over the rocks with bulging bellies, which could be taken to represent the Mother Goddess.

But the continent of Europe had the distinction of having the nude female figurines from the Upper Palaeolithic and Palaeolothic sites. Though these figurines do not form part of our study, but it would not be out of place to make a casual reference to these figurines. As for example, let us refer to the Upper Palaeolithic figurine of the Venus from Grimaldi cave, made in steatite. The figure is quite nude with a round head, developed bosoms and the pelvic region. The figure is without any decoration but the entire body is quite bulky. Another figure of Venus from Dolniv-Vestonice (Moravia), belongs to the Upper Palaeolithic class. In this case too the figure is nude and the breasts are hanging downwards, like those of old ladies. Upto this stage these figurines of the Mother Goddess were thought objects of veneration, but no legends were possibly ascribed to them. Coming to the Palaeolithic evidence of the Mother Goddess from Laussal Dordagne (Framee) we meet with a nude standing female figure with her head turned to the right, the bosoms are hanging as in the case of the figure from Doloni Vestonice, and the body is quite bulky projecting advanced age. But the most important aspect is that the figure is carrying the horn of a buffalo held horizontally in her raised right hand.

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This indeed testifies that the posture is the part of some legend. Evidently while travelling from the Upper Palaeolithic to the Palaeolithic period the Mother Goddess was possibly associated with some legend, details of which still remain a mystery. Coming to more recent times mention may be made of a specimen of the Mother Goddess from Iran, which is made in alabaster in a stylised manner with copper rings added to the portion of the head. This might stand for some ritual practices. A contemporary specimen of the Mother Goddess having the composite form with an owl like face attached to a human body which is quite youthful but the breasts are comparatively smaller in size.

Coming closer to the Indian border lands, mention may he made of the specimens from Namazga culture. In these specimens the figure of the goddess has decorations on the body, though there is an evidence of the figures without decorations as well. But the one having decorations has well-made hair neatly arranged, with necklace around the neck. In the specimens from the Namazga IV period the nudity has been subdued.

Baluchistan is situated in the periphery of the Indus site and the sites there, are considered to be a bit earlier than the Harappan sites. There also, enough of Mother Goddess figurines have been discovered. A few specimens each from Mehergarh and Mundigok, are fragmentary figurines, while a figurine from Mehergarh, depicts the Mother Goddess carrying a child in her lap. This aspect is rarely found in other early Harappan sites. The figurines from Zhob valley from Baluchistan have round sockets for eyes and their lower portions are missings. Possibly some gems or precious stones served as eye-balls, which are now missing. The figurines from Mehi, though are upto the waist only but their necks are adorned with beautiful necklaces, sometimes with three strings. The Periano Ghundai, has produced a unique specimen of a *yoni* symbol and the sites of Gumla and Mehergarh have produced female figurines in front profile with locks of hair falling in the front. A torso from Dambsadat (Baluchistan) depicts the female figure with well developed breasts and thickly ornamented under the neck, leaving the breasts bare. In this case too the nudity is not exhibited.

The Mother Goddess in terracotta from Mohenjodaro has a variety of forms, but though she appears often standing but her pelvic region is covered with a band rolled round her waist. In some cases she had a form with a turban like head-dress and profuse ornamentations not only around her neck, but these ornaments cover almost the entire body in front. Even the waist band is decorated. The ornaments are all handmade together with the terracotta figurines. In an interesting case, the goddess has been shown with the horns over the head spreading on both the sides. A few specimens of the terracotta figures from Mohanjodaro depict the goddess having a pot-belly with bosoms falling downwards and the hands hanging down. The very appearance of those figurines exhibit as if the deity is feeling uneasy because of the weight of her pregnancy. While the female terracotta figurines from Harappa have similar presentation

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in comparison to those from Mohenjodaro, but the ornaments and the head-dresses in some cases are more prominent and thick. An interesting feature of the terracotta female figurine from Harappa is that the goddess is shown here also with an infant in her hand, while in another instance, she appears with a fanshaped head-dress. The terracotta Mother Goddess figurines from Chanhudaro, though pot-bellied, but their faces are better preserved. In one case atleast, she has a necklace around her neck, consisting of thick beads and nice hair-do with the hair parting from the middle of the forehead and falling downwards. In addition to these terracotta figurines, the site also produced owl shaped figurines. The Harappan site of Dhaulavira (Gujarat) too has produced similar types of figurines.

Besides the Indus valley sites, another goddess was also discovered from Inamgoon, representing the Jorwe culture. Both early and late Jorwe people worshipped a nude Mother Goddess with a head and without head. The later was seated on the bull. Many of these figurines were found in unbaked condition which was possibly intentional as proved by the discovery of an oval clay box, with the nude goddess within. Both the goddesses were under worship, as it is done today, in millions of houses keeping the goddess standing or in a vertical condition providing a semicircular clay support for the goddess with head and blind holes within the navel of the headless goddess in the back of the clay bull. The terracotta figurines of the Mother Goddess from Diamabad are, however, without any decoration but nudity is quite subdued in them.

Before concluding the discussion on the availability of terracotta Mother Goddess figurines discovered from the Harappan Chalcolithic or other contemporary sites, mention may be made of the most interesting discovery of some terracotta figurines from the historical site of Taxila, which according to Sir John Marshall belong possibly to the same period but have been described to be the 'Primitive idol' type. These terracotta figurines are in buff colour and have no arms or head. The legs too end in a point immediately below the thighs, the division between them is shown by lightly incised lines. The nose is painted as in the pre-historic figures and round the neck are a series of bands similar to those found in the figures of the Chalcolithic Age. These as well as the hip girdles and cross straps in front of the body are shown by highly incised lines. The hair which fall down at the back of the neck is square cut and indicated by the incised lines. Behind the head in the middle of the hair, is a rosette and three other rosettes are on the top of the head. In some cases the heads are missing but they possess almost similar decorations. The Mother Goddess from Taxila also appears in ivory though such specimens belong to a considerably later period. In these cases too nudity is conspicious by its absence from the pelvic region. The Mother Goddess is also reported to have been discovered from the Lothal Excavations. While one such specimen is oval shaped, in another case only bust has been found. Both the specimens do not project nudity, except the breasts.

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From the foregoing account it would be evident that there was a general tendency to make the Mother Goddess pretty nude in the Upper Palaeolithic figurines while in the Palaeolithic figurines, though the nudity in the figurines was maintained but somehow, the practice of attributing some legends to the figurines became current. The glaring example of this is available in the specimen from France, in which case the nude figure of a female carries the horn of a buffalo in her right hand. Unless some legend is attached to it, there ostensibly appears to be no utility of a nude female figure carrying a buffalo horn. During the period that followed, the female figurines were brought under the influence of rituals and legends and they were even conceived in composite forms, with the head of a bird or an animal fixed over a human body. Of the various such examples available on the subject, mention may be made of the figures from Bagdad Museum, included in this work for illustrative purpose.

The Mother Goddess figurines from the Chalcolithic sites of Harappa and Mohenjodaro project the popularity of the goddess in more than one way. During this period, no doubt, the tendency of projecting her nude continued to be followed, but at the same time, she was also projected partially draped. At least in the terracotta figurines, the projection of nudity was less popular than in the seals. Another aspect which was quite popular in these figurines was the ornamentation. Some of the figurines are found well ornamented. The practice of projecting the goddess in composite forms also gained currency and several figurines having the bird or animal heads were brought into use. The most conspicuous aspect of the adoration of the Mother Goddess figurines in the Chalcolithic period has been, their becoming the object of worship in the ritualistic practices. In this connection one is reminded of the seal from Mohenjodaro in which the goddess is shown placed upside down and a tree emerging from the womb of the figure. Over the reverse of this seal the supposed scene of a female sacrifice is also shown. Besides the above the Mother Goddess is shown in a variety of forms in the antiquarian remains of the Chalcolithic sites which includes, her depiction as Tree Goddess, Earth Goddess, Lajja-Gauri, Eye goddess, Nursing Mother and several other forms.

The practice of the adoration of the Mother Goddess continued during the historical times as well, as would be evidenced from the metal and terracotta figurines discovered from numerous historical sites. The gold figure of the standing nude goddess from Piparawa and Nandauraya Nandangarh, belonging to the early Mauryan period is standing erect, though nude. The feet are turned on both sides, while the arms are hanging down displaying the palms outwardly. She has the beautiful head-dress, a beaded girdle and ear-rings as ornaments on her person. Most of the specimens of the Mother Goddess pertaining to the Mauryan times and few of centuries before and after the Christian era, portray the mixed trend. While the specimens from Patna, Buxur, Mathura (Sonkh) and Kausambi, project the goddess profusely ornamented and richly attired, displaying height of workmanship and the taste in designing the ornaments and the costumes of the deity. The specimens from Angucha (Rajasthan), Vaisali,

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Navadatoli, and Oriup are designed on the basis of the ancient traditions portraying the Goddess in abstract form. Some of the terracotta figures of the Mother Goddess from Gupta period are also based on early traditions and are fragmentary in nature, though some of them portray the owlshaped heads fixed over the human bodies. A comparative study of the terracotta figurines of the Mother Goddess from the earliest times in India would reveal that in Pre-historic period she was sometimes projected as a pregnant female and in the pre-Harappan sites of Afghanistan and Baluchistan; she was portrayed with ornaments adorning their necks. She was also portrayed in the form of a *Yoni* and was also shown in a much developed form, some times as the pregnant mother, and at times as the nursing mother, carrying an infant in her arms. At times she was nude, while sometimes, more particularly in the terracotta art, she was not only portrayed with elaborate head-dress, but also with her nudity covered with band of clay covering her waist, which could also serve as a waist band.

It is noteworthy however, that the pottery female figurines of the type found at Mohenjodaro and Harappa some 600 kms apart are also found at the sites in Baluchistan. The figurines of the latter country are radically different in appearance from those of the Indus valley. In southern Baluchistan, for instance, the figurines from Mehi site, are invariably in the flattened piece below the waist. They are more primitive in make, for the mouth is not indicated and the hands and arms instead of hanging straight down on the sides are drawn up and sometimes touch the breasts. The same methods are, however, evident in the representation of the jewellery that adorns these figures by means of pillets of clay and in the use of pillets for the eyes, which, as occasionally as at Mohenjodaro also are incised so as to indicate the pupils. At Mehi the figures of hands are carefully indicated, whereas at Mohenjodaro and Harappa they rarely are; and at Mehi, the elaborate head-dress is missing which forms such distinctive feature of Indus valley figurines. Some figurines have also been discovered from Northern Baluchistan which are quite few and so imperfect for comparison with the Indus figurines. In these figurines, though incised pellets were used to represent eyes and jewellery and the mouth is sometimes indicated, but it is never shown with the realism of the Indus valley figurines.

The specimens of Mohenjodaro and other Harrappan sites stand testimoney to her being adored in various forms, as Śakaṁbharī, Lajjā Gaurī, Śakti, Eye Goddess as well as the Earth Mother. This trend, however, continued upto the historical period since many such specimens were discovered from the historical sites of Ahiechatra, Kosambhi, Rajghat, Buxur and Patna. Indeed the adoration of the Mother Goddess has been brought down to the modern times, though in a much developed form, with numerous legends ascribed to her worship.

Śiva is another prominent deity who is found present in the seals. He is one of the most influential member of the orthodox Brahmancial triad. The interesting Chalcolithic site of Harappa has also revealed a seated human figure with three faces wearing the horned

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head-dress. The three-faced figure is shown seated over a low Indian throne in the typical attitude of *Yoga*; with legs double bent beneath him and toes turned upwards. The posture indicates the typical *Yogāsana* commonly known as *Kūrmāsana,* where the heals are placed under the gluteals. The figure is surrounded by wild animals like the boar, elephant, buffalo and a tiger, besides a buck shown in the front of the pedestal. The deity has been identified as Śiva in the form of Paśupati. This deity is worshipped by the present day Hindus in human as well as the symbolical form of *Liṅga.* He is found represented in both the forms in the specimens from the sites of Mohenjodaro and Harappa. Interestingly human figures with horns are found depicted in the artefacts from Hissar, Gumla, Burzshom, Mohenjodaro as well as Kalibangan.

In another seal, Śiva has been shown with two faces alone. In the later Indian mythology, Śiva has been conceived as having one, two, three, four or even five faces. The depiction of Śiva with more than one face is quite common in India, where we have *Eka-mukha-liṅga,* to *Pañcamukha liṅgas* depicting Śiva with more than one face. The *Mānasāra* and other texts on the Hindu temple architecture prescribe that in case the shrine of Śiva has only one entrance, a *Śivaliṅga* with a single face should be consecrated there and in case it has two doors then the *liṅga* with two heads; in case of the shrine having three entrances, then *Śivaliṅga* with three heads; and in case of the shrine having four doors, then a *liṅga* with four human faces of Śiva carved on the four sides, known a *Caturmukhaliṅga* should be consecrated in the shrine, with each head facing each one of the four doors. Evidently, the germs of the present day adoration of Śiva in both human as well as symbolical forms, are available in the Harappan culture, though it may not be possible to claim with authority the name by which he was adored, because it is common belief that in the Vedic literature Śiva as such was hardly popular but he was more popularly known in the Vedic texts as Rudra.

Another most interesting god who appears over the pottery from Harappa is Yama. Though he is not as popular as Śiva or the Mother Goddess in the early specimens of Harappa and Mohenjodaro, but Vats has referred to his depiction over the pottery from Harappa.

In the modern Hinduism, there are several deities having composite forms, the genesis of which could be traced in the Chalcolothic culture of Harappa and Mohenjodaro. Several composite figures of more complex form are found on the seals of Mohenjodaro and Harappa. These include human faced goat or ram, part bull and part elephant, with human contenance. These curious composite forms so clearly reminiscent of the *Pramathas, Gaṇas* and attendants of Śiva of the subsequent days are also apparently represented in stone images in the round. Such stone images can hardly have been other than cult objects included for worship. Some of the seals, however, are amulets which were used by votaries of this curious syncretic form of deities. Thus we have several specimens like half serpent and half human, half human and half bull besides half woman and half tiger. In addition to the above, there are depictions of

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composite animals which include three-headed animal, composite animals, humans with horns and tails besides the combination of a tiger, leopard and rhinoceros.

The Chalcolithic antiquities also project the adoration of the animals in one or the other form. These sacred animals include buffalo, monkey, bull, goat, tortoise, crocodile, besides the birds like peacock and dove. Some of the seals point towards the adoration of the snakes. Another conspicuous aspect of the Chalcolithic people has been the tree worship or the adoration of the tree spirit or the tree goddess. This tree worship was in vogue during the entire Vedic and post-Vedic, period besides the time of the epics and the Purāṇas and has reached the modern times in a variety of forms and some of the trees like *Pipal, Tulasi* and *Neem* have been declared as the sacred trees.

Another conspicuous aspect of the religion of the Chalcolithic people of Harappa and Mohanjodaro had been the development of the legends and their depiction over the Indus seals. In this connection several examples could be cited, one of which being the seal in which two male figures are shown carrying two uprooted trees. This scene has been interpreted to mean the depiction of the story of Yamalārjuna so elaborately described in the *Mahābhārata* as well as the Purāṇas. Then there is a scene of a standing male fighting with a tiger on his either side which has been variously interpreted.

The evidence of the Chalcolithic sites reveals also the adoration of the forces of nature by the people of Harappa and Mohenjodaro. These include, the solar symbols on potteries, the worship of fire as evidenced from a number of fire-altars, and the water highlighted by the presence of a structure at Mohenjodaro, which has been interpreted to be a place of community bath. Besides the solar symbols, Svāstika happens to be another religious symbol, which is found present in the antiquarian remains of Harappa, Mohenjodaro as well as other Chalcolithic sites. This symbol is found present in a number of ancient civilizations of world.

Indeed in the religion of the Chalcolithic people of India, which could not only be parallelled in the contemporary worlds but this is true of every pre-historic as well as the most historic religions as well. But taken as a whole, their religion is so characteristically Indian, as it could hardly be distinguished from the still living Hindusim or at least from that aspect of it which is bound up with animism and the cult of Śiva and the Mother Goddess, still the two most potent forces in the popular worship. Among the many revelations the Chalcolithic sites have had in store for us, none perhaps is more remarkable than that of the discovery that Śaivism has a history going back to the Chalcolithic Age or perhaps even farther still, and that it thus takes its place as the most ancient living faith in the world.

Besides the inportance of the role played by the Palaeolithic man in India, it has been long recognised and from a comparison of Palaeolithic and Neolithic artefacts, the inference has been drawn that it was actually on Indian soil that the latter were first evolved from the former.

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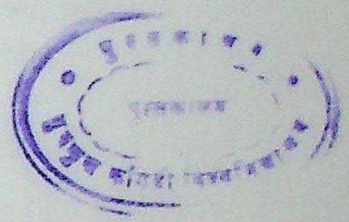
Though scholars may differ over this view, but there can be no question that the north-west of India, with its vast well-watered plains, with its abundance of game, its warm but variable climate—more propitious perhaps than now and with its net-work of rivers affording ready means for communication and intercourse—must have offered a specially favourable field for the advancement of the early society, alike, when man in hunting stage and later when he had turned himself to agriculture and the domestication of animals or was opening up commerce with distant lands. One thing which stands out clear and unmistakable at the Chalcolithic sites is, that the civilization hitherto revealed is not an incipient civilization, but the one which was already age old and stereotyped on Indian soil with millions of human endeavours behind it.



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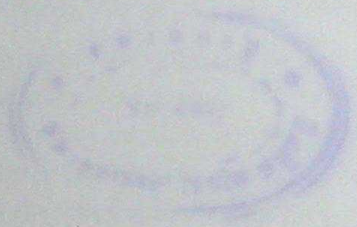

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Index

Abode of bliss, 69
Absolute doctrine, 57
Aceramic neolithic, 21
Acquatic animals, 91-92
Acropolis, 114
Aditi, 49-50
Aegean, 14, 25
Aelian, 98
Afghanistan, 2, 14, 19, 20, 134
Africa, 129
Agamas, 64
Agni, 4, 111-15
  Assignment to, 112
  At Diamabad, 115
  At Lothal, 113-14
  Excavation evidence, 113
  Fire god, 111
  Sacrifice, 112
  Worshipped, 112
Agrawala, V.S., 36
Ahicchatra, 32, 33, 39, 134
Aihole, 50
Aitareya Brāhmana, 70
Aiyanar, 55
Akhtar Dheri, 35, 36
Alamgirpur, 28, 30
Alampur, 50
Allahabad, 16
Amaru, 5
Amriti, 49
Anatolia, 28, 60
Andhra Pradesh, 30
Animals, 81-91, 136
Animals with human heads, 75-76
Anjira, 18
Anustarani, 70
Araṇyāni, 101
Archaeological Survey of India, 29, 68
Arghaṇdeb river, 19
Aruru, 74
Aryans, 59
Asia, 15, 18
Asia Minor, 25
Asseriyan art, 76
Āśvatāyana Grhyasūtra, 70
Atharvaveda, 114
Australia, 129
Azes I, 33
Azes II, 33

Babylonia, 43
Badari, 43
Bagdad Museum, 118
Bali, 84, 85
Balkan, 25
Baluchistan, 2, 5, 14, 15, 18, 20, 24-26, 56, 66, 131, 134
Banavali, 28
Banawali, 19
Banerjea, J.N., 4, 40, 44, 62, 82, 91, 108
Bara, 17
Belan Valley, 13, 15, 16, 130
Bhansāsura, 81
Bharhut, 73
Bharat Kala Bhavan, 45
Bhimbetika, 13, 15
Bhir Mound, 29, 32, 45
Bhita, 46, 48

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Bhopal, 13, 15
Bhuteśvara, 56
Bilawali, 29
Birds, 92-94
Bist, R.S., 28
Bokardan, 49
Bolan Pass, 20
Bona Dea, 33, 35
Brahmā, 40, 57, 81, 83, 111, 124
Brahmanical text, 11
Brahmi, 123-24
Brhat Saṁhita, 125
British Museum, 34
Bronze age, 31
Buddha, 61, 73, 94
Buddhists, 62
Buffalo, 7, 81-83, 136
Buff-wave group, 20
Bull, 7, 56, 87, 136
Burzhom, 63
Buxar, 30, 134

Cāgavaktra, 91
Cāmuṇḍā, 24, 25
Caṇda, 103
Caṇḍi, 21
Candragupta, 98
Candraśekhara, 56
Central India, 73
Chalcolithic age, 6-7, 11, 130, 136-37
Chanhu-daro, 5, 25-26, 76
  Bull, 89-90
  Mother Goddess, 25-26
    Bangles, 26-27
    Head dress, 26
  Sun, 119-20
Chandoli, 30
Childe, Gordon, 93
Chili worship, 49
Chirand, 29
Composite forms, 73-79
  Animals with human heads, 75-76
  Human and animal forms, 73-75
  Human with horns, 78
  Multi-headed animals, 76-77
  Other composite animals, 77
  Tiger-Leopard and Rhinoceros, 78
Crete, 25
Crocodiles, 7, 91, 136
Cyclades, 25
Cyproite figure, 43
Cyprus, 25

Dabarkot, 17, 20, 22
Dakśa Prajāpati, 11, 83, 91
Daksināmūrti, 61
Damb Sadat, 18, 21, 131
Dānavas, 83
Danu, 83
Danubian, 43
Darśapurnamāsā, 114
Dashlaji, 19
Dead and disposal of dead, 70
Deb, H.K., 123
Deccan, 29, 32, 68
Demelar, 73
Devaloka, 83
Devi, 7
Devi Mahatmya, 82
Dharma Cakra, 61
Dhimapur, 67
Dhyāvā-pṛthivi, 41
Diamabad, 27-28, 67, 85
  Fire altars, 115
  Lingas, 67
  Mother Goddess figure, 27-28
Diaya, 15
Dieri, 117
Divine Mother, 14
Doloni-Vestonice, 130
Don river valley, 15
Dove, 93-94
Dravidian root, 55
Dundabhi, 9, 82, 83-86, 103
  Becomes a youth (life style), 84
  Birth of, 83
  Blood of, 85
  Buffalo attacked by a lion, 85-86
  Fight with Bāli and death, 84-85
  Relations with Ravana, 83-84
Durga, 7, 74, 75, 81, 85
Durga Mahiśasuramardini, 82
Durga Saptaśati, 82

Ea, 91
Ea-bani, 107
Early historical sites, 32
Earth Goddess, 8, 26, 41

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Earth mother, 41-47, 134
Fertility aspect, 42-43
Nudity, 42
Ring stones, 43-37
Stone discs, 46
Egypt, 25, 50, 90, 118
Ekamukha liṅga, 69, 135
Ekhatana, 99
Elam, 25
Elāpatra Nagraja, 73
Elephant, 81
Elmite, 93
El-ubaid, 5
Enki, 91
Enkidi, 74, 109
Erinyes, 55
Europe, 18, 31
Ey Goddess, 30, 54, 134

Female deities, 13-55
Earth mother or earth goddess, 41-47
Eye-goddess, 50
Lajja Gauri or Aditi, 49-50
Mother Goddess, 13-40
Nursing mother, 50-51
Śākaṁbhari, 47-48
Śakti worship, 40-41
Fertility goddess, 46-47
Fore altars, 7, 113-14, 115
Forest deities, 101-06
Aranyāni, 101
Katyāyani, 102-03
Tree goddess, 103-04
Tree worship in natural form, 104-06
Vana Durgā, 102
Vindhya-vāsini Durgā, 102
Food producing cave man, 14
Fortuna, 33

Gabarbands, 18
Gaṇas of Śiva, 84, 135
Gandhara, 35, 39
Gaṇeśa, 10, 30
Gaṅgā, 18, 32, 92, 121
Garutmā Suparna, 37-38
Germany, 125
Ghosh, A., 14, 16, 18, 19, 32
Giriśa, 56
Giyan, 5
Goat, 7, 90, 136
Gopinatha Rao, T.A., 64
Gordon, D.H., 18, 35
Graeco-Roman, 33
Grand II, 16
Greek, 33, 55, 124
Grimaldi cave, 120
Gudimallan, 44, 69
Gujarat, 19
Gumla, 63
Gupta period, 32, 48
Gupta, S.P., 16

Hades, 69
Halāhala, 82
Half human and half bull, 74, 135
Half human and half serpent, 73-74, 135
Half woman half tiger, 74-75, 135
Hal-Tarxiam, 43
Hanging Garden of Babylon, 98
Hanuman, 86
Harappan, 1-2, 9, 15, 18, 44, 48, 55, 60, 63, 66, 73, 130-31, 136
Animals, 11
Antiquarian remains, 9
Bull at, 88
Civilization, 6, 10
Cults and their ideology, 6
Mother Goddess, 23
Shrines of Great Mother, 6
Harivaṁśa Purāna, 70, 103
Haryana, 19
Hastinapur, 32
Hellenistic, 33
Hema, 83
Hillbrandt, 70
Himvan, 84, 103
Hinduism, 6-8, 11, 130, 135
Hindu mythology, 9, 56
Hissar, 63
Hittite seal, 64
Human and animal forms, 73-75
Human with horns, 78
Huviṣka, 47

Inamgaon, 29, 30
India, 2, 8
Indian God and Goddess, 1-11
Adoration of divinite, animals etc., 7-8

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Adoration of water Gods, 5
Archaeological evidence, 1
Baluchistan before 3000 B.C., 5
Composite animals, 10
Epigraphical evidence, 1
Forms of, 1
Harappan site, 1, 2, 6
Human and animal sacrifices, 8
Icons of gods worshipped, 4
Liṅga and yoni worship, 7
Nude goddess, 4
Places of worship, 8-9
Post-Harappan sites, 1
Pre-Harappan sites, 1-2
Religion in Chalcolithic, 4
Seals and Sealings, 10
Types of deities under adoration, 3-4
Vedic and post vedic literature, 1
Indian Museum, 46
Indra, 4, 81, 88, 111
Indus valley civilization, 9, 14, 25, 41, 55, 66, 94, 130
Seals, 82
Iran, 5, 31

Jagadambā, 40
Jaganmāta, 40
Jain Texts, 1
Jakhara, 30
James, E.O., 4, 14, 15
Jemdet Nasr tables, 85
Jhalawan, 17, 89
Jhusi, 46, 49
Johns, C.H.W., 124
Jorwe culture, 27, 30, 31

Kailāśa, 56, 83
Kalalūk-damb, 17
Kalat, 17
Kāli, 7, 21, 24, 25
Kālibangan, 14, 19, 24, 63
Kalpavṛksa, 100
Kāmikāgana, 126
Kandani mounds, 17, 20, 22
Kaniṣka, 47
Kanyakumari, 69
Karnataka, 30
Kashmir, 69
Kasomari Pathen, 67
Kasyapa, 83
Katyayana, 102
Katyayana Śrauta Sūtra, 70
Kausambi, 30, 33, 46
Kavi, 49
Kerala, 30
Kile Gol Mohammad, 18, 20
Kiskindhā, 84
Kobra Pahar, 118
Kolwa, 5, 17, 20, 22, 89
Goddess at, 22-23
Konadapur, 49
Kosam, 45, 46
Kosambi, 134
Kot Biji, 63
Kṛṣṇa, 56, 94
Kubera, 102
Kulli, 4, 14, 17-22, 24, 50
Kupruk, 20
Kurmāsana, 135
Kusana, 35, 46, 73

Lajja Gauri, 49-50, 134
Lal Qila, 30
Lauriya Nandangarh, 31, 47
Laussal Durdagne, 130
Liṅga, 7, 9, 43, 61, 64, 65-69, 135
Lion, 7
Lohanda, 15
Loralai, 17, 18, 20, 89
Lothal, 19, 28, 66, 90, 113-14
Agni, 113-14
Mother goddess cult, 28

MacKay, E.J.H., 9, 14, 40, 63, 64, 77, 82, 83, 85 91, 108, 109, 118
Madhura, 83, 84
Madhya Pradesh, 13, 31
Mahabharata, 56
Mahādeva, 40, 56, 83
Mahādevi, 40, 60, 65
Mahākāli, 7
Mahakuteśvara, 50
Maharashtra, 30, 31, 70
Mahāyogi, 56, 59-60
Mahiṣāsura, 85, 102, 103
Makaran, 89
Malabar point, 46
Male deities, 55-79

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Linga worship, 65-69
Diamabad, 67-69
In Indus Valley and Baluchistan, 66-67
Śivalingas, 65-66
Śiva or Paśupati, 55-63
Divine hunter, 60-61
Genesis, 55-59
Horn of divinity, 61
Lord of beasts, 60
Māhāyogi, 59-60
Standing besides bull, 62-63
Two deer, 61-62
Two headed deity, 64
Yama, 69-70
Mallewan, 50
Malta, 43
Malwa, 68
Manasa, 94, 103
Mandhura, 83
Mandodari, 84
Mangho Pir, 92
Mansara, 125, 126
Marica, 83
Markandeya Purana, 47
Marshall, John, 3, 5, 6, 10, 14, 15, 25, 28, 44-46, 57-59, 63-64, 66, 73, 74, 82, 108, 109, 132
Masaon, 30
Mashki, 89
Matanga, 85
Mathura, 30, 33, 36-39, 44, 46, 54, 73
Identification of goddess, 39
Terracotta busting goddess, 37-38
Terracotta female goddess figure, 37-38
Mathura Museum, 36
Matrisvan, 111
Matsya Purana, 99-100
Maurya, 41
Māyā, 83, 103
Māyāvi, 83, 84
Mehi, 17, 18, 21, 22, 24, 66, 134
Bull, 89
Goddess, 22
Mother Goddess at, 22
Mehrgarh, 15, 20, 131
Menant, 64
Mendes, 90
Mesopotamia, 5, 25, 57, 74, 76
Minaon, 24, 93
Minaon Crete, 60
Mitathal, 19
Mitra, 4
Mizar-i-Sharif, 20
Mohenjodaro, 3, 5-6, 8-10, 15, 17, 26-27, 43-44, 48, 50, 56-57, 60-63, 66, 73-75, 77-79, 82, 85-87, 93, 103-06, 109, 118, 131, 135
Seal 222, 58
Seal 235, 58
Seal 420, 58-59
Seal 522, 83
Monkey, 7, 86-87
Moravia, 15
Moringer, Johannes, 117, 118
Mother Goddess, 5-7, 11, 13-39, 93, 130-33
Cult of, 14-15
Early historical sites, 32-39
Akhtar Dhari, 35-36
Gandhar, 35
Mathura, 36-39
Sar Dhari, 35
Taxila, 33-35
Evidences of, 15
Female figures, 13-14, 16
Harappan sites, 23-29, 132-133
Figures from, 24
From Banavali, 28
From Bhagwanpura, 28
From Chandu-daro, 25-27
From Diamabad, 27-28
From Lothal, 28
From Ropar, 29
From Taxila, 28
In Indus Valley, 14
In Stone Age culture, 13
Post-Harappan culture, 29-32
From Inamgaon, 30-32
From Newasa, 30
Pre-Harappan sites, 16-23
Bangles and armlets, 21
Bird like feature, 17
Breasts, 21
Eye, 19-21
Head-dress and ornaments, 17-19, 133
Terracotta female figures, 17-20
Waist, 21
Pre-historic evidences, 15-16
Mughal Ghundai, 17, 20, 24, 66-67
Mukhalinga, 69
Muktadvara, 46

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Multi-headed animal, 76-77
Munda, 103
Mundigak, 19, 131
Murray Aynsley, H.G.M., 127
Museum of France, 16
Mycenaean, 24
Mythology, 107-09
  Bull associated with Śiva, 108
  Bull shows rugged horns, 108
  Forms in artefacts, 107
  Tail and two horns over head, 109
  Trees with platform round, 108-09
  Triangular prism, 107
  Uprooted trees, 109

Nagarjunakonda, 49
Nāgas, 3, 7, 59, 65, 73, 74, 95
Nagdā, 30, 50
Naigomaya, 91
Nal, 5, 18
Namazga culture, 131
Nandi, 56
Nasik Inscriptions, 125
Nateśa, 56
Naukratis, 34
Navadatoli, 30, 50, 134
Navadurga, 102
Navasa, 29, 30
Neolithic sites, 20, 136
Nevasa, 27, 30, 49
Nile, 25
Nippur, 90
Nude male figure, 130
Nundura, 18
Nursing mother, 50-51

Ochre coloured ware, 30
Omkāra, symbol, 123
Oriap, 29, 134

Painted Gray ware, 30
Paithan, 49
Pakistan, 2
Palan, 50
Palestine, 25
Parvati, 6, 83
Paśupati, 48, 55, 56, 64, 75
Pataliputra, 30, 46
Patna, 16, 134
Peacock, 92-93
Periano-Ghundai mound, 17-18, 20, 22, 24, 131
Persia, 14, 25
Peru, 19
Phallic representation, 66
Piggot, Stuart, 21
Pipal tree, 10, 49, 58, 105, 106
Piprahwa, 47
Post-Harappan sites, 1
  Mother-goddess figure from, 29
Prabhas Patan, 30, 50
Prakrti, 25
Pramathas, 135
Pre-Harappan sites, 1-2, 7, 11
  Carbon dates, 18
  Cultural equipment, 18
  Mother goddess, 16-23
  Pottery, 18
  Stratigraphy, 18
Prehistoric Rock paintings, 13
Punjab, 5
Purana Qila (Mauryan), 45-46
Puranas, 7, 9, 38
Puṣkara, 121

Quetta, 5, 14, 18-20

Rajasthan, 19, 28
Rajghat, 30, 33, 44, 46, 134
Rajgir, 47
Rāmayana, 70, 85
Rammon, 56
Rana Gundai, 18, 20, 21
Rapson, 123
Rāvaṇa, 83-84
Ravi, 5
Reptiles, 94
Ṛgveda, 28, 46, 61, 70, 101, 112
Ṛgvedic hymns, 4
Rhinoceros, 78-79
Ringstones, 43
Rock shelters of Bhimbetika, 16
Rojdi, 19, 28
Romans, 50
Ropar, 29, 45, 50
Ross, 21
Rudra, 7, 55-56, 60
Rudraksetra, 82
Rupar, 28, 45, 46

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Śaivism, 6
Śaivites, 62, 66
Śakambhari, 15, 47-48, 134
Śaktas, 41, 45
Śakti, 7, 11, 15, 25, 45, 134
Śakti worship, 40-41
Śaligrāma, 65
Sanchi, 29
Sankalia, H.D., 15, 50, 63, 129
Sankisa, 46
Saptamatrikās, 103
Sar Dheri, 35-36
Satapatha Brāhmana, 46
Satruñjaya, 46
Schliemann, 127
Seals, 10
Shahi-tump, 17, 89
Shamash, 57
Sharma, 16
Shiwaliks, 29
Siah Damb, 10
Sialk, 5
Sin, 57
Singanpur, 118
Sircap, 29, 33
Sirkat, 40
Sistan, 31
Sita-kirdi, 118
Śiva, 6, 7, 9, 11, 24, 40, 55-63, 65, 94, 108, 134-35
  As destroyer, 56
  Bull symbol, 56
  Dances, 56
  Divine hunter, 60-61
  Genesis, 55-57
  Horn of divinity, 61
  Lord of beasts, 60
  Mahāyogi, 59-60
  Standing besides bull, 62-63
  Two deer, 61-62
Śivalingas, 7, 44, 65-67, 135
Śiva Paśupati, 3, 47
Śiva Temples, 7
Skanda Purana, 82, 191
Smithsonian Institution, 124
Sonki, 50
Snakes, 7, 94-95, 136
Śri, 45
Srāvasti, 33
Śri kantha, 56
Stein, Aruel, 17, 89
Stone age culture, 13
Sugriva, 84
Sukśama Śarira, 92
Sūla, 82
Sumer, 93
Sumerian seals, 64, 85
Sun, 7, 116-120
  At Chanhudaro, 119-120
  Early symbols of, 117-19
  Primitive ideology, 116-17
Sunga, 45, 73
Suparna, 37
Surab valley, 18
Sur Jangal, 18, 20
Surkotada, 14, 19, 66
Sutras, 74, 129
Svāstika, 104, 123-28
  Amulets and beads, 126-27
  Buddhist used, 125
  Identification of, 123-124
  In Greece, 124
  Movement of Sun in, 126
  Omkāra symbol, 123
  Origin of symbol of, 123
  ornamental device in, 125
  Popular with Hindus, 125
  Town planning and village schemes, 125-26
  Used in Indian life and culture, 124-25
Svayambhu, 65
Syria, 25

Taittiriyā Samhita, 59
Tantras, 64
Tara, 84
Taxila, 25, 28, 32, 33-35, 44-46, 132
  Draped female deity seated with bird, 34-35
  Female deity standing with bird in left hand and wearing tight shirts, 34
  Female deity standing with full flowing skirt, 34
  Figures under Graeco-Pathian influence, 33
Taylor, E.B., 98
Tell Brak, 54
Tiger and leopard, 78-79
Togau, 18
Tortoise, 91, 136
Transcaspra, 25
Tree goddess, 48, 103-04

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Tree worship, 8, 51, 97-101
Adoration of tree spirits, 97, 100
Anthropomorphic, 98
As religious practices, 97
Cry, laugh, ejection, 99-100
Earliest form of divine ritual, 98
Fruit trees, 99-100
In natural form, 104-06
Place in Indian art, 99
Relation between man and, 98-99
Trimurtis, 57
Trinity, 61
Triskale, 127
Triśūla, 48
Two-headed deity, 64
Tyche, 33
Tylore, E.B., 117

Ujjain, 30, 50, 63
Uma, 6, 7
Upper Palaeolithic, 14, 30, 133
Ur, 93
Urnup, 31
Urus bull, 8, 106
Utkranti, 70
Uttar Pradesh, 31

Vaisali, 45-46
Vaitarni cow, 70
Vaitarni river, 11
Vamana Purāna, 102
Vanā Durgā, 102
Vanaspati, 59
Varanasi, 44
Varuna, 4, 84, 120-21
Bathing, 121
Quality to purify, 120
Vāsudeva, 47
Vats, M.S., 48, 62, 67, 69-70, 92, 107
Vayu, 102
Vedic deities, 4, 6
Vedic literature, 41
Venus, 15, 37, 130
Vidisha, 100
Vinatā, 37
Vinca, 43
Vindhya mountain, 103
Vindhyavāsini, 6, 102
Viṣṇu, 40, 56, 65, 91, 94, 102
Viṣṇupaṭṭas, 45
Visvakarma, 103
Vrsākapi, 86
Vṛṣa-Skandha, 87
Vrsotsarga, 88

Water, 7, 120-21
Western Asia, 14
Wheeler, 18

Yajurveda, 56
Yakśi, 104
Yakśi Haritri, 33
Yama, 8, 11, 69, 81, 85, 135
Yamalārjuna, 8, 9, 109
Yamuna, 49, 94, 121
Yelleswaram, 49
Yoga, 60
Yogadaksinamurti, 61
Yogapaṭṭas, 45
Yogāsana, 135
Yogi, 56
Yogini, 104
Yogiśvara, 7
Yoni, 7, 9, 44, 67

Zhob Valley, 4, 5, 14, 17-23, 89, 131

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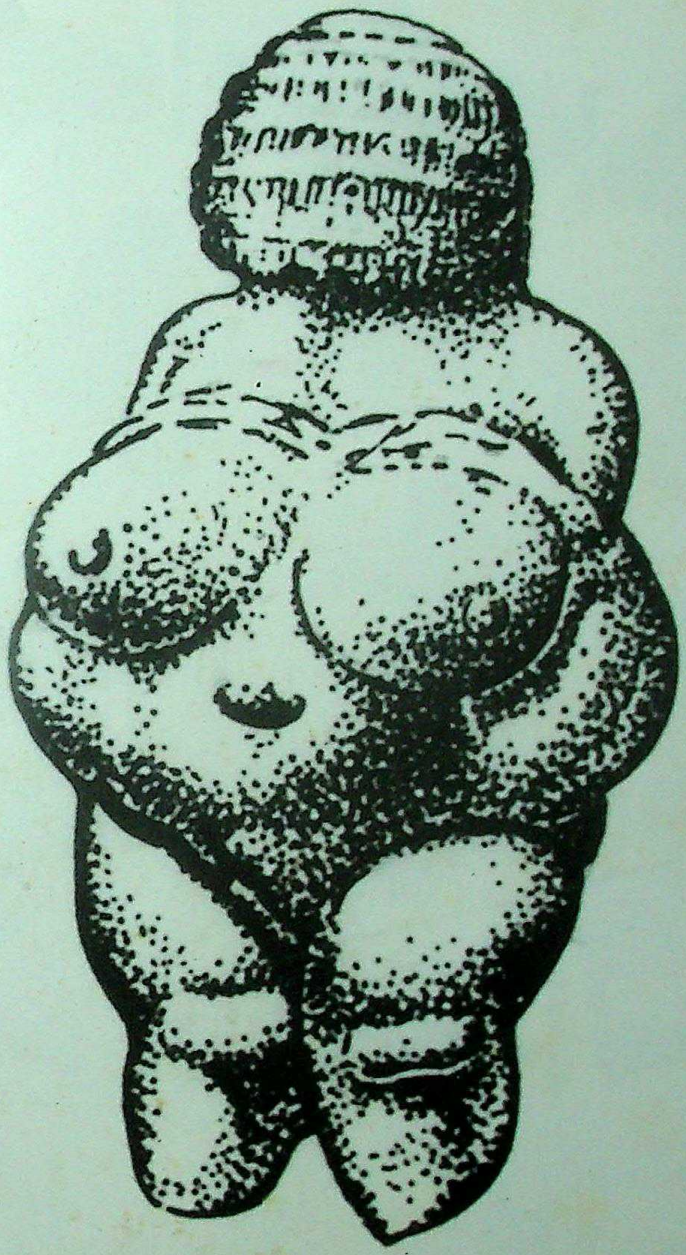
Plates



Pl. 1. Venus from Willindrof, upper Palaeolithic.

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(a) Terracotta Mother Goddess figurines, Mehi, Baluchistan.

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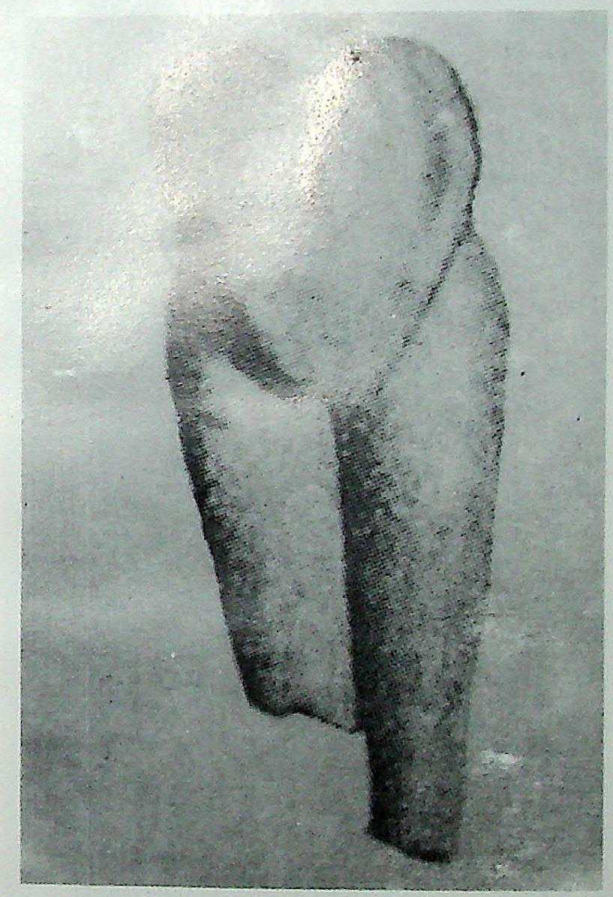
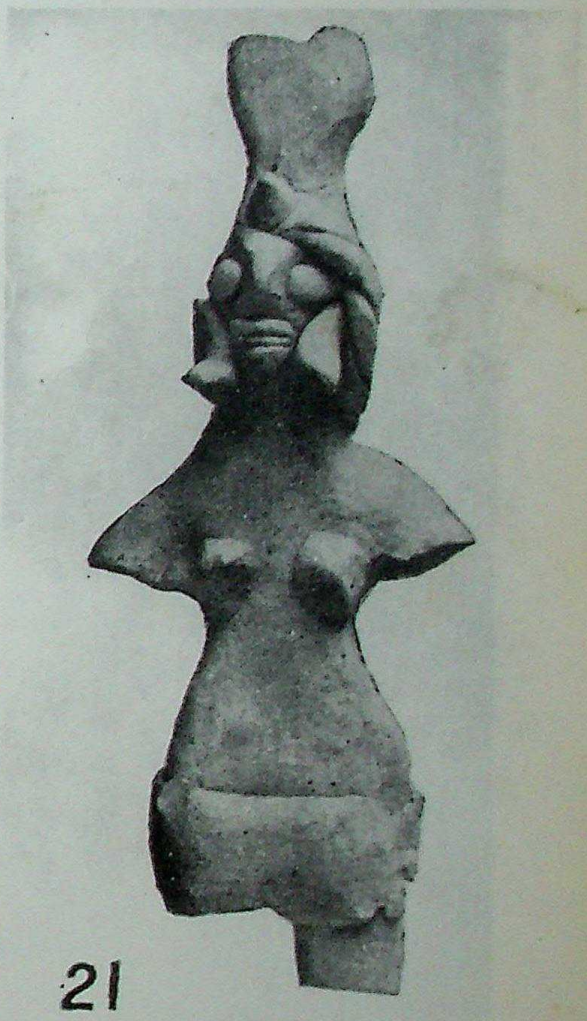


Pl. 2. *Yoni* symbol, Periano Ghundai, Baluchistan.



Pl. 3. Terracotta Mother Goddess with raised head-dress, Mohenjodaro.

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Pl. 4. Terracotta Mother Goddess, profusely ornamented, Mohenjodaro.

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Pl. 5. Terracotta Mother Goddess figurines. Mohenjodaro.

Pl. 6. Terracota Mother Goddess figurines, Mohenjodaro.

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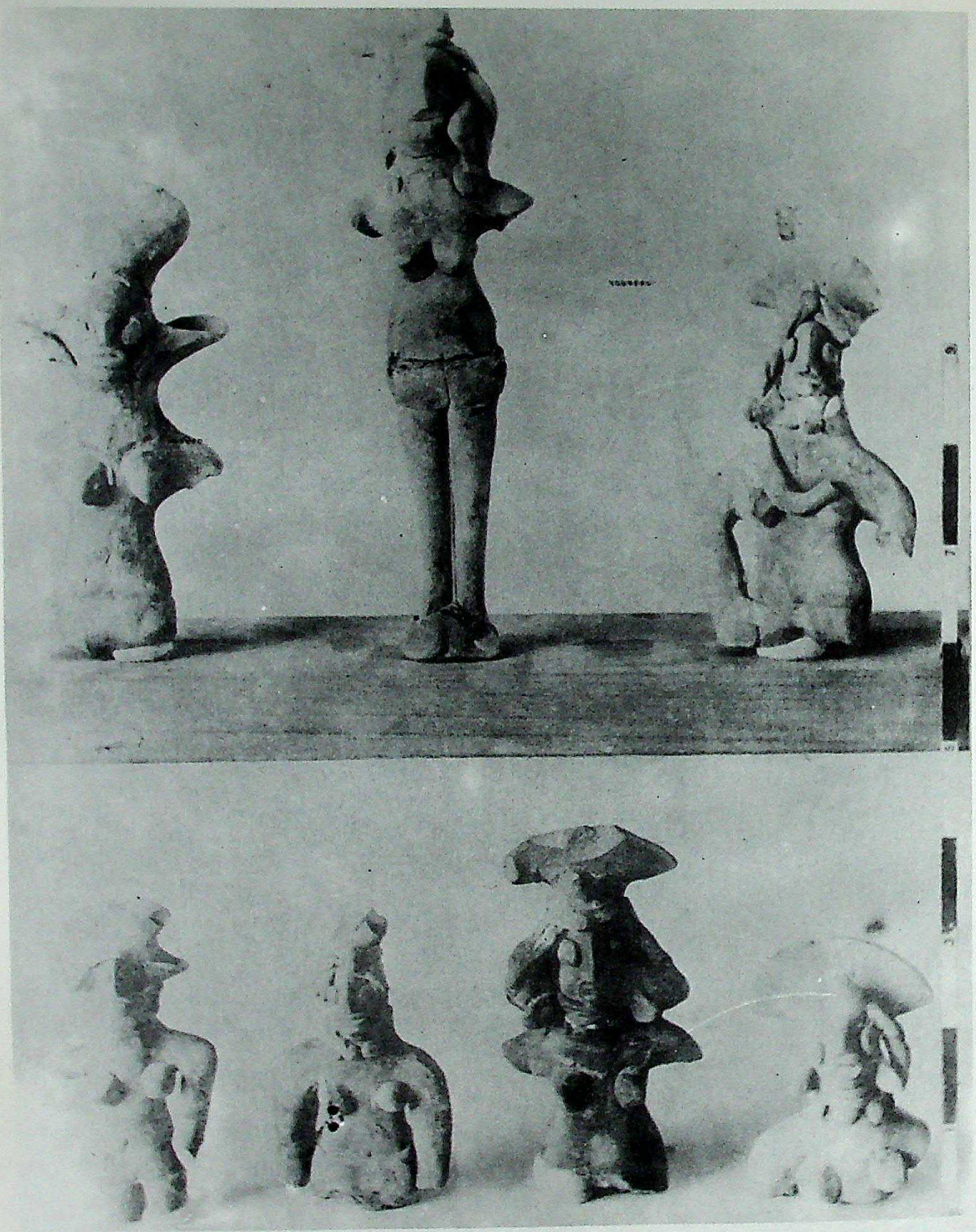

Pl. 7. Terracotta Mother Goddess figurines, Mohenjodaro.

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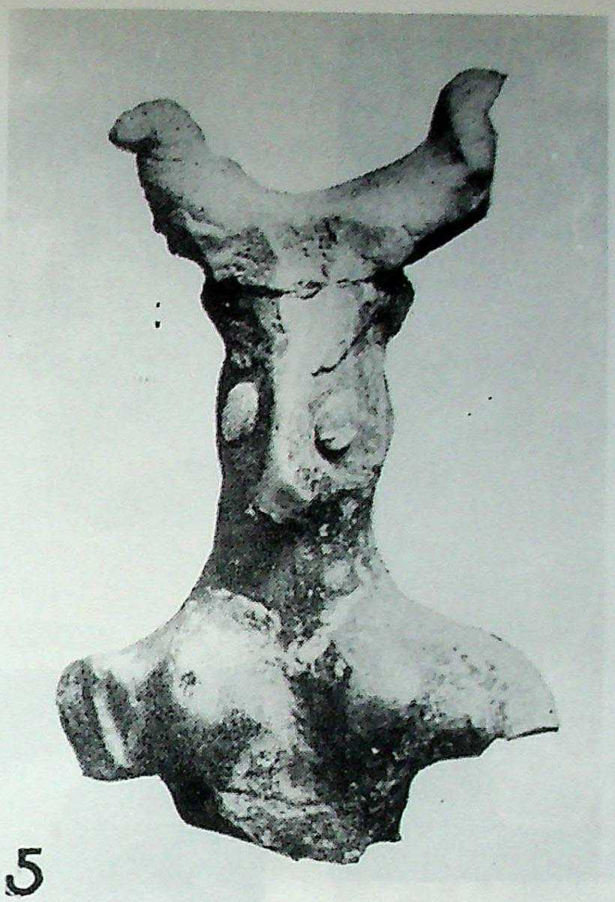
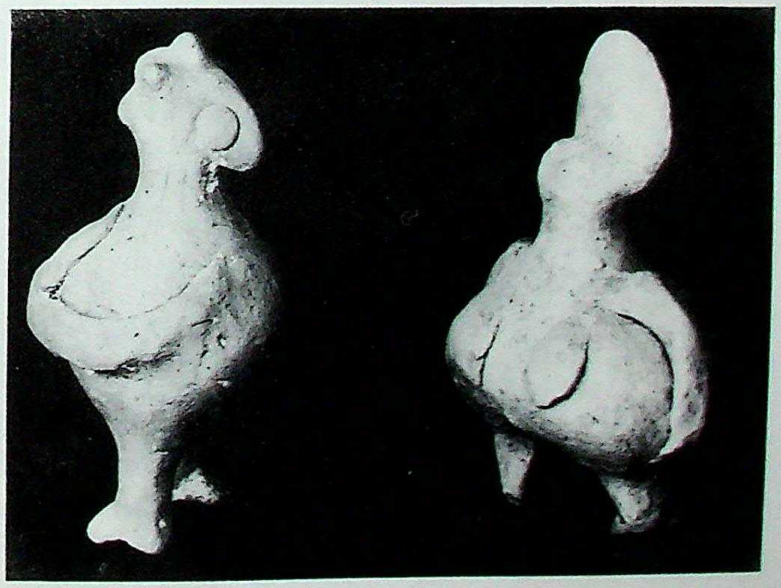


Pl. 8. Bust of terracotta figurine of Mother Goddess with horned head-dress, Mohenjodaro.



Pl. 9. Pot bellied figurines of Mother Goddess, Mohenjodaro.

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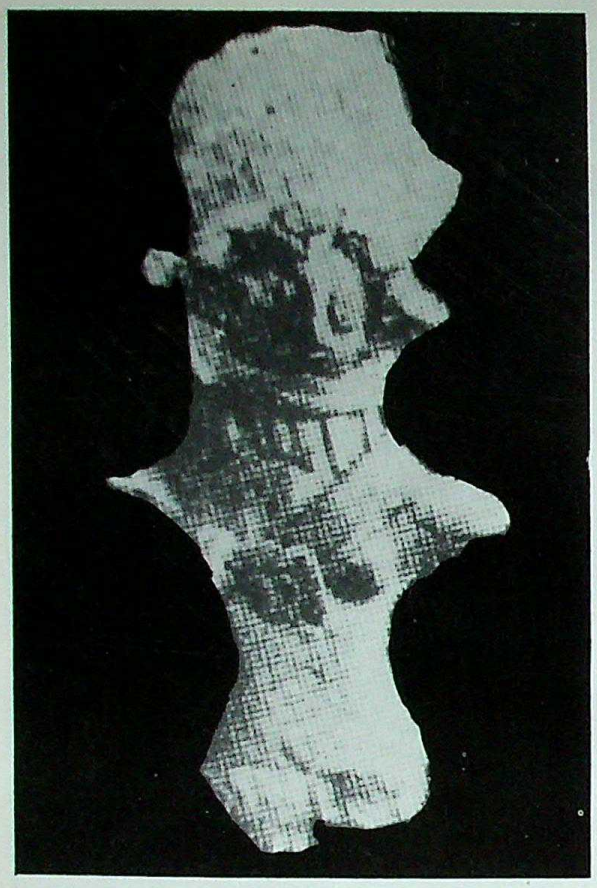
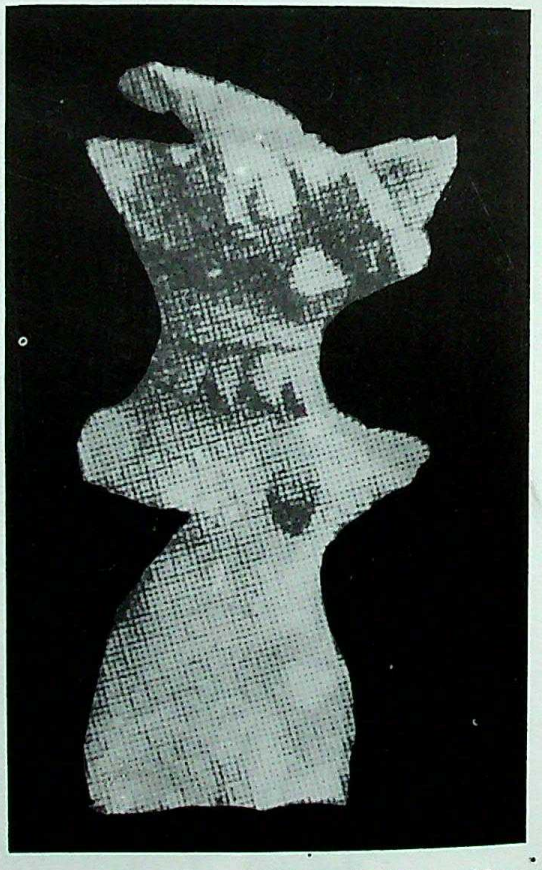


Pl. 10. (a) Terracotta figurine of Mother Goddess with raised head-dress and wearing ornaments, Harappa.



(b) Terracotta figurines of Mother Goddess with raised head-dress and necklace around the neck, Harappa.

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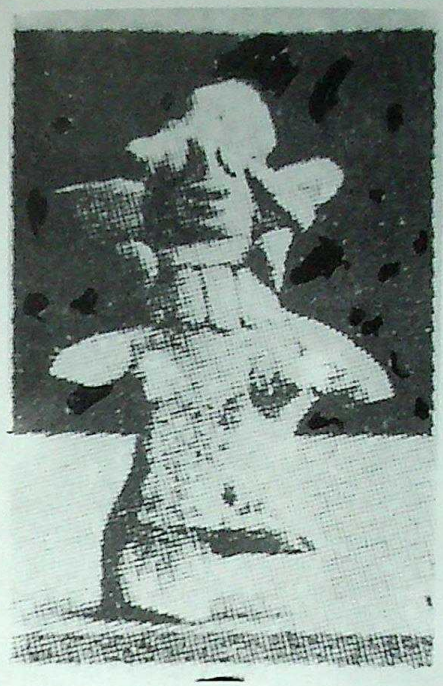
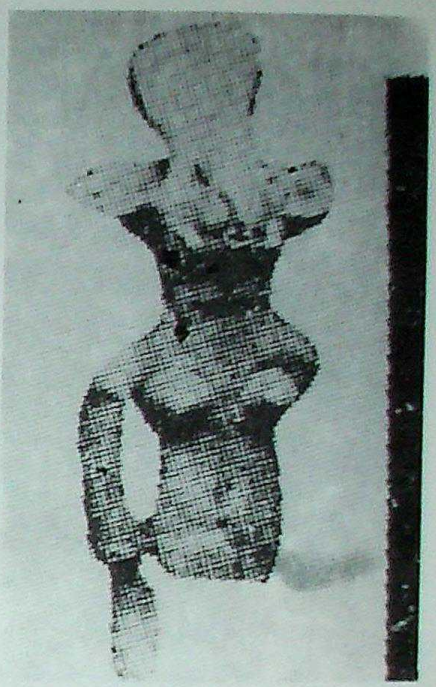


Pl. 11. (a) Terracotta figurine of Mother Goddess with thick ornament worn round the neck; Harappa.



(b) Terracotta figure of the Mother Goddess with fan-shaped head-dress; Harappa.

Pl. 12. Terracotta figurine of the Mother Goddess with fan shaped head-dress, Harappa.

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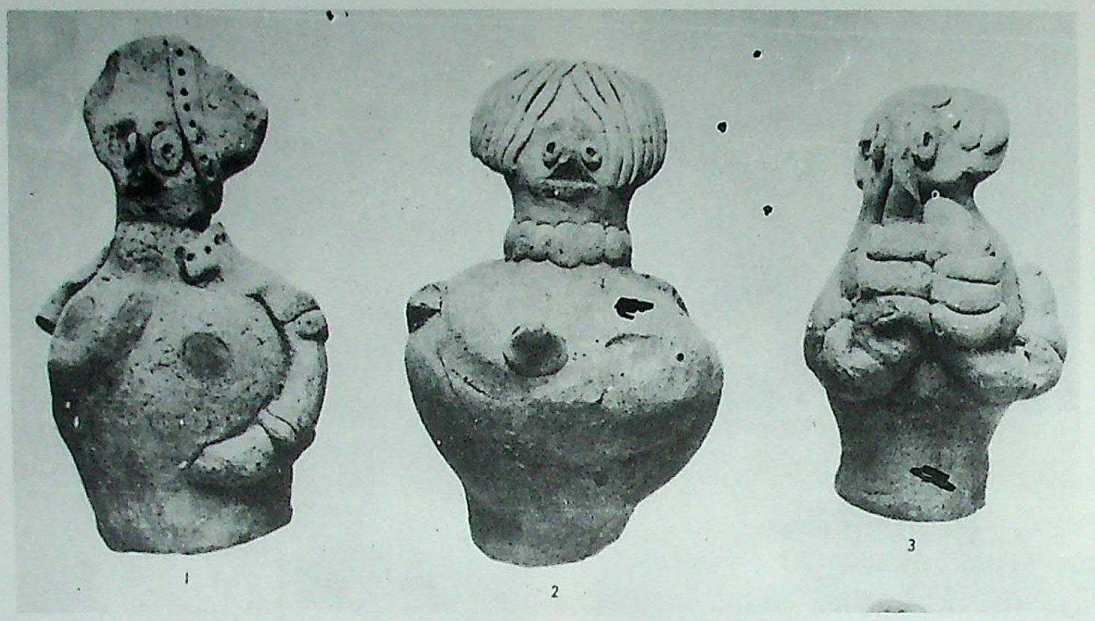
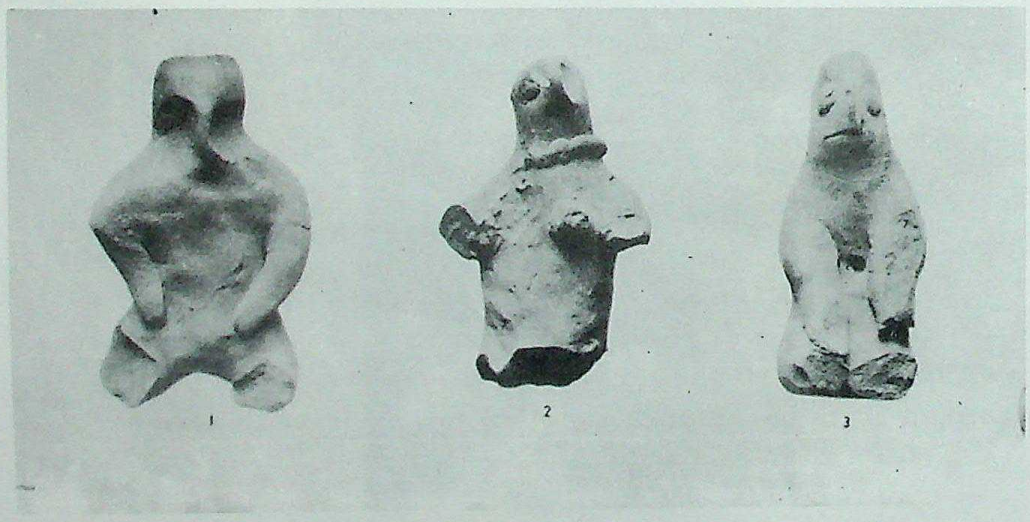


Pl. 13. Terracotta figurines of the Mother Goddess with pot bellies; Chanhu-daro.



Pl. 14. Terracotta figurines of Mother Goddess, with owl-shaped head, Chanhu-daro.

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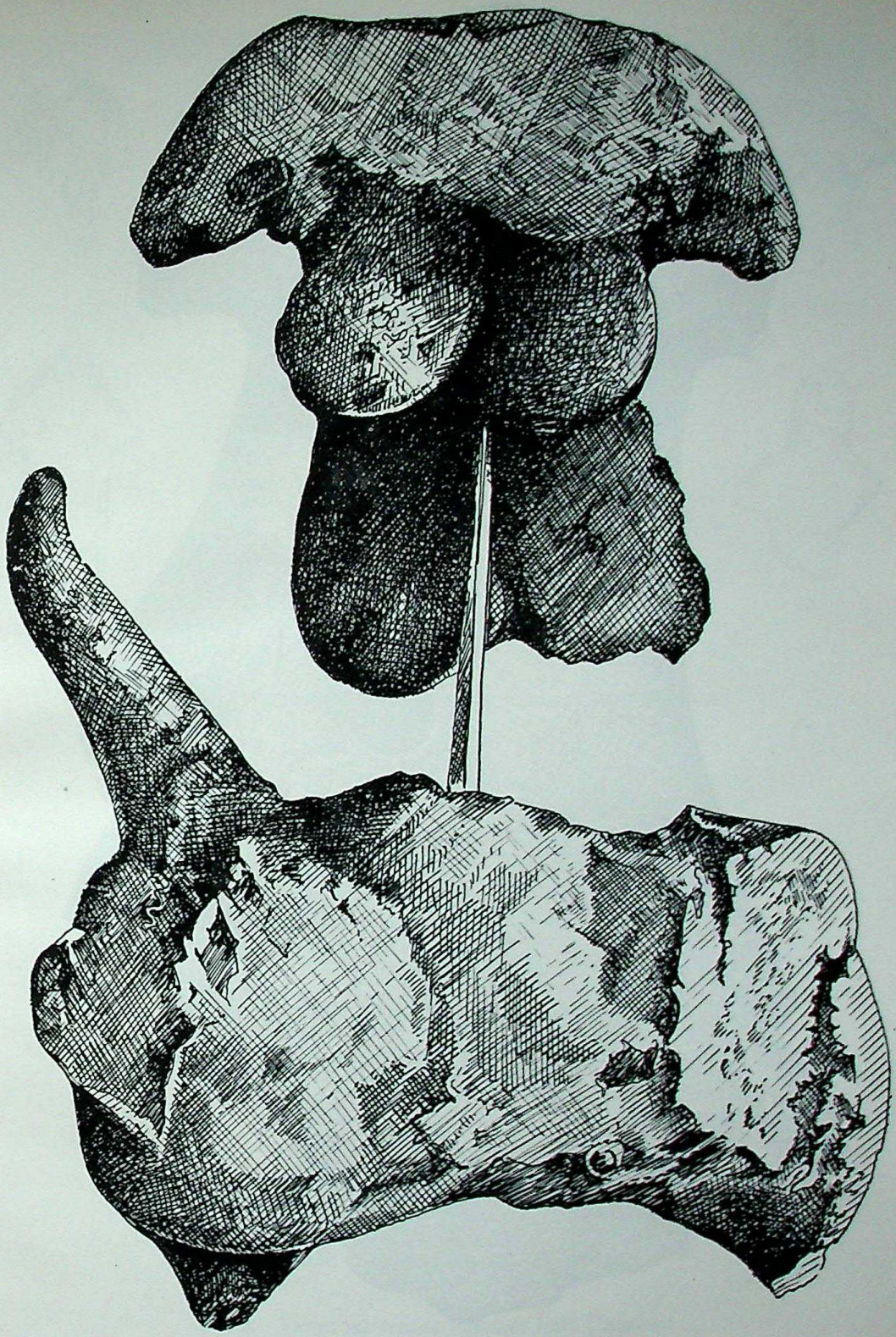

Pl. 15. Terracotta headless Mother Goddess figurine mounted over bull, Inamgaon.

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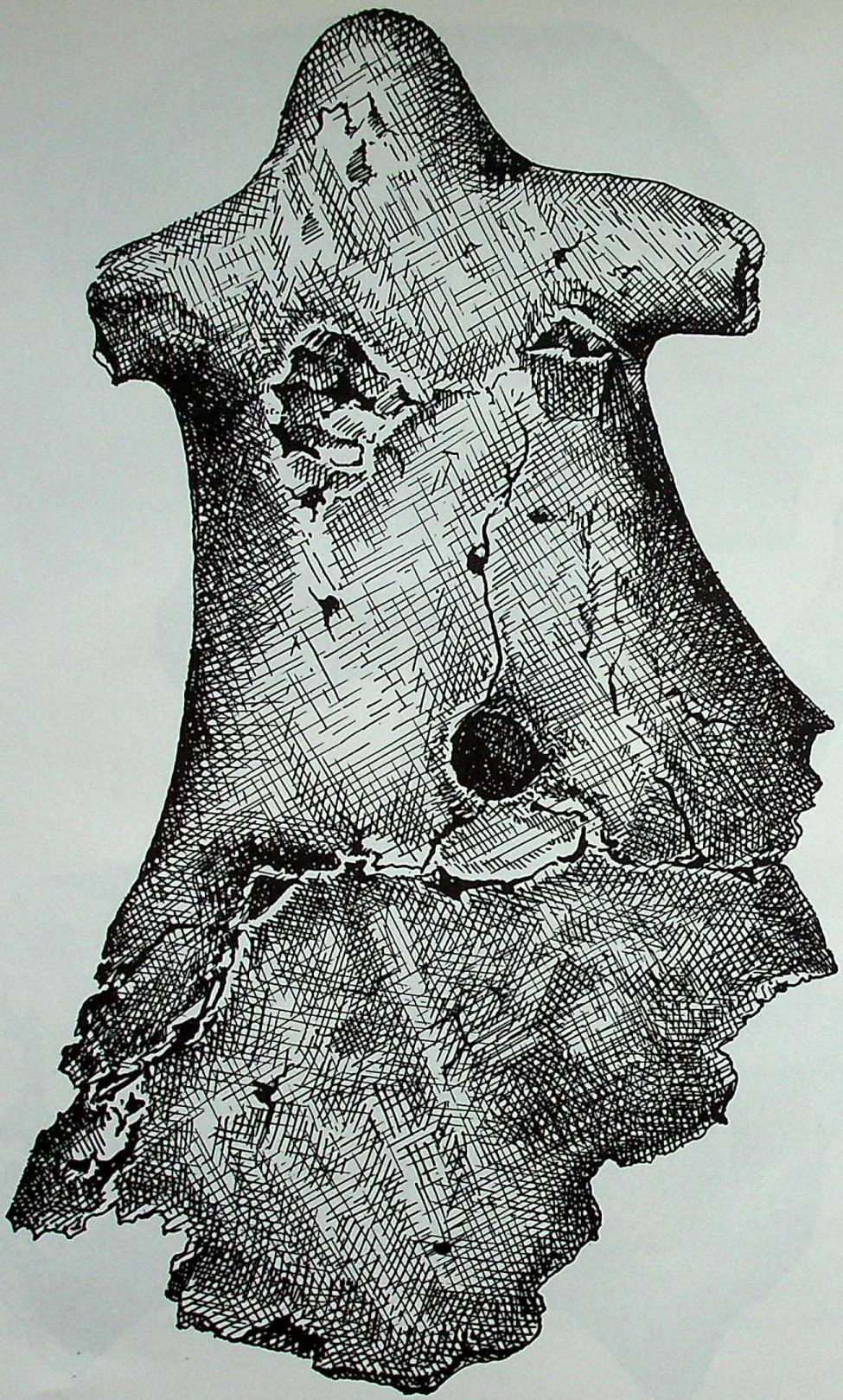

Pl. 16. Terracotta Mother Goddess figurine, Newasa (Maharashtra), 1200 B.C.

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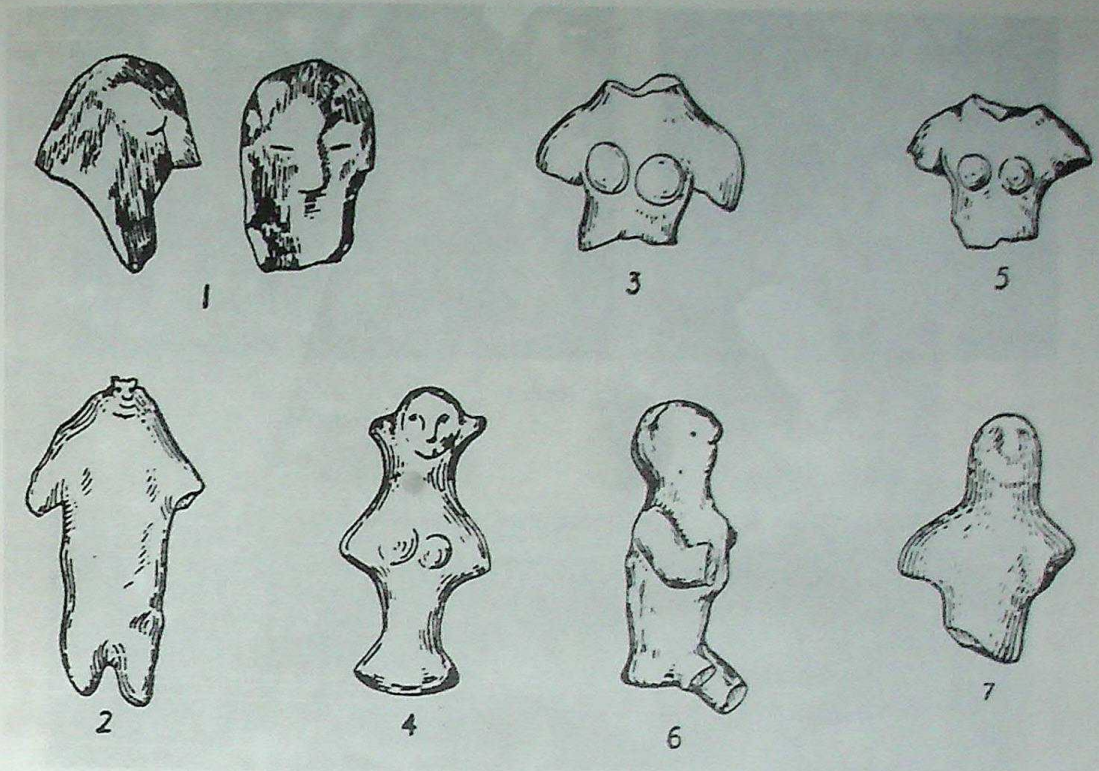
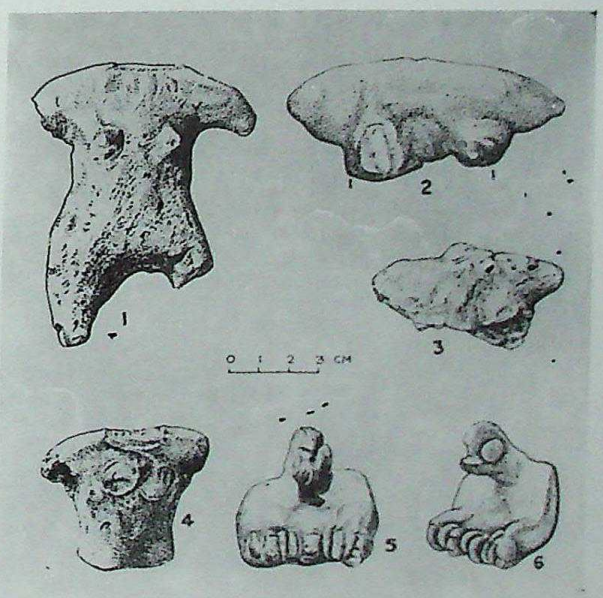


Pl. 17. Terracotta Mother Goddess figurines from Diamabad.



Pl. 18. Terracotta female figurines from Diamabad.

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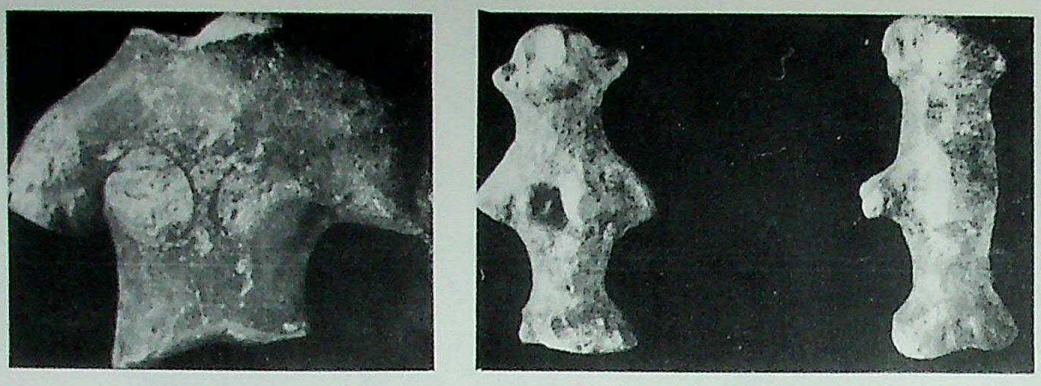

Pl. 19. Terracotta Mother Goddess figurines from Lothal.

Pl. 20. Seal showing tree goddess with seven ministrants, Mohenjodaro.

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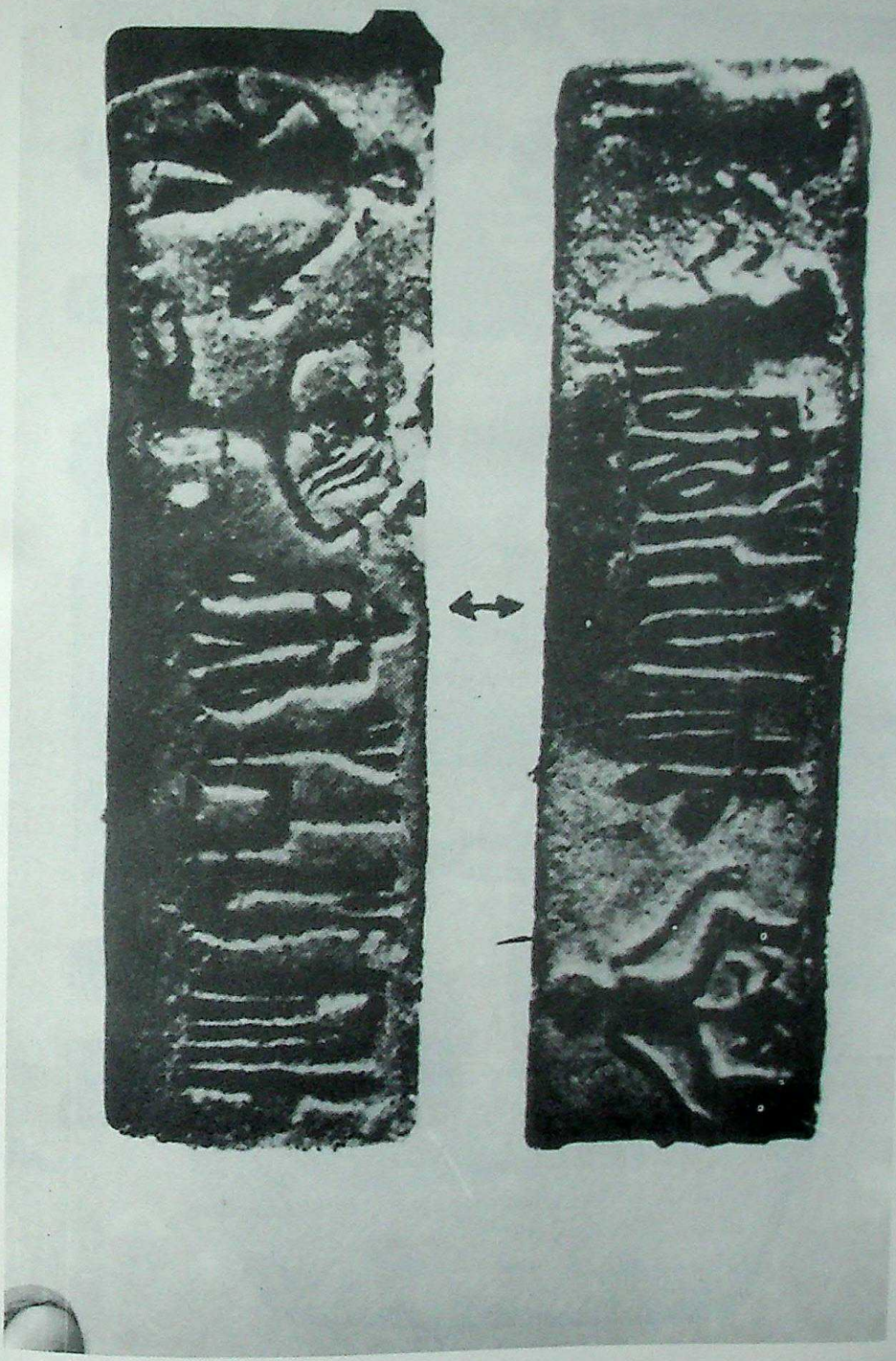

Pl. 21. Terracotta seal depicting to the right on the reverse a nude female figure placed upside down with plant issuing from her womb, and legs drawn apart, Mohenjodaro.

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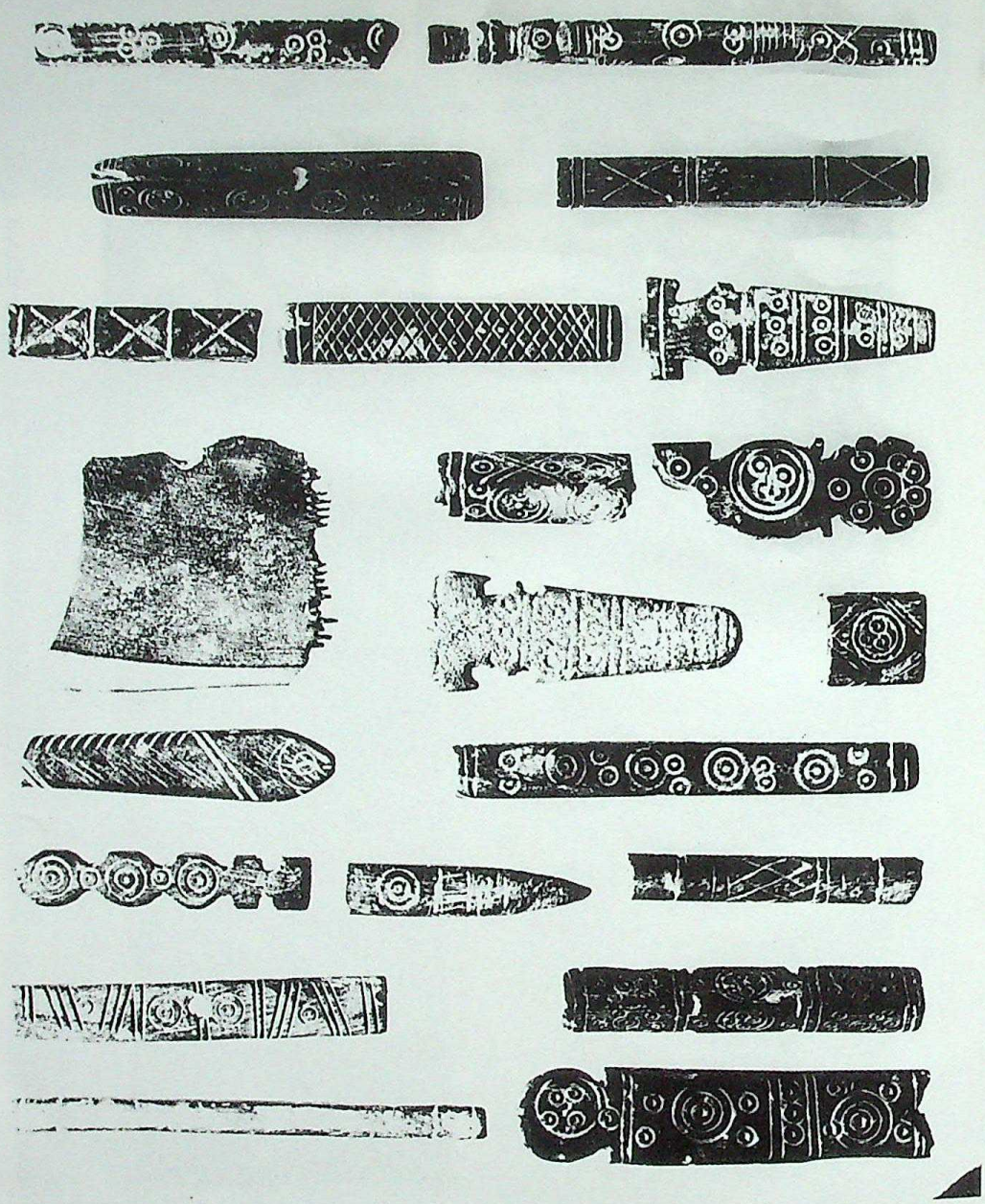

Pl. 22. Ivory objects showing eye motifs, Mohenjodaro.

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Pl. 23. Gold plaque showing standing Mother Goddess, Lauriya Nandangarh, 600 B.C.

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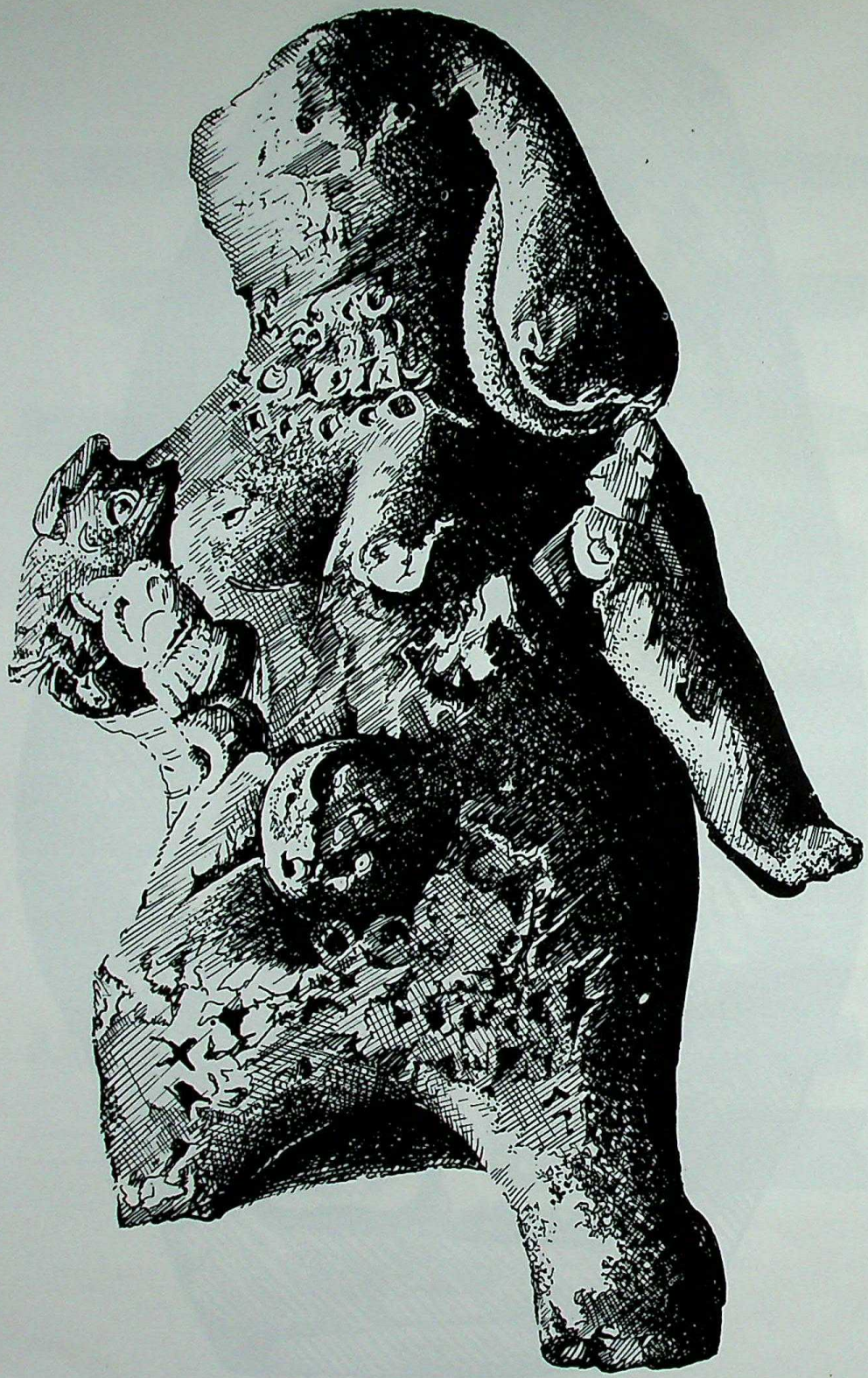

Pl. 24. Terracotta Mother Goddess, Figurines, Ahicchatra.

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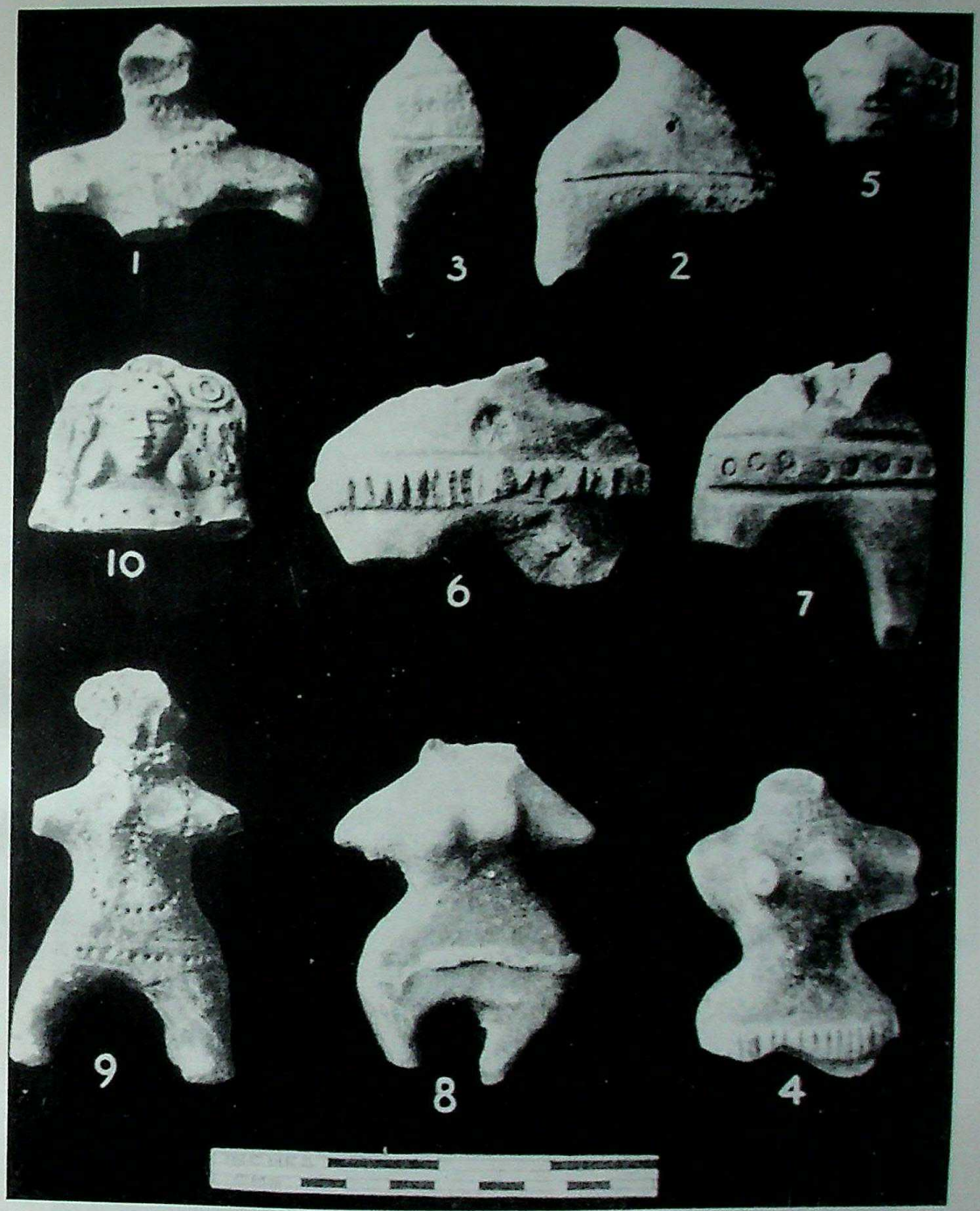

Pl. 25. Terracotta Mother Goddess figurines, Ahicchatra.

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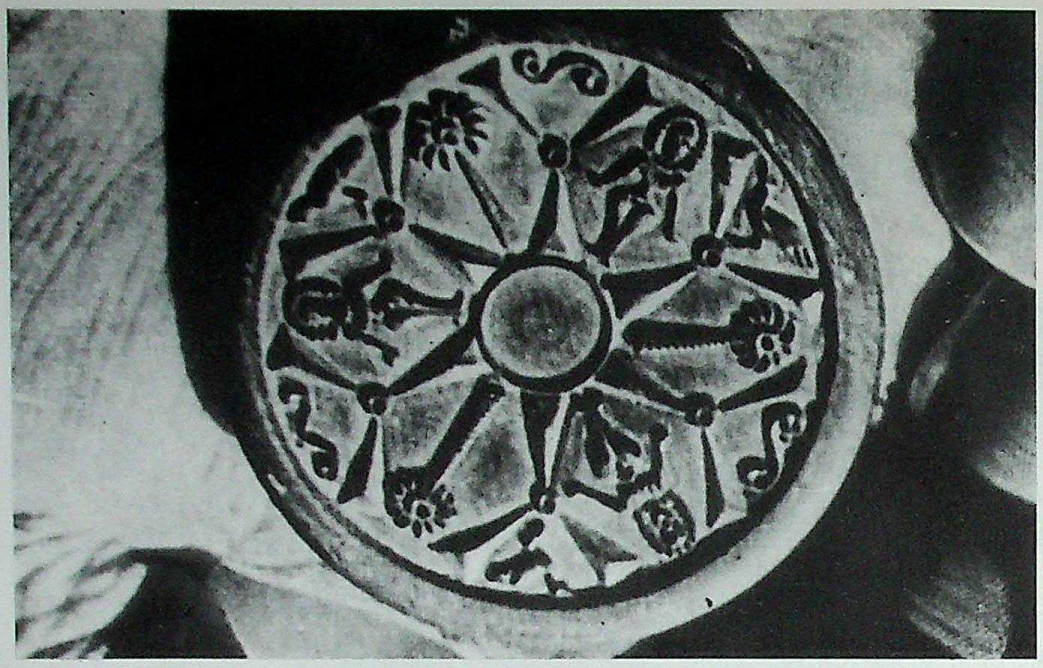
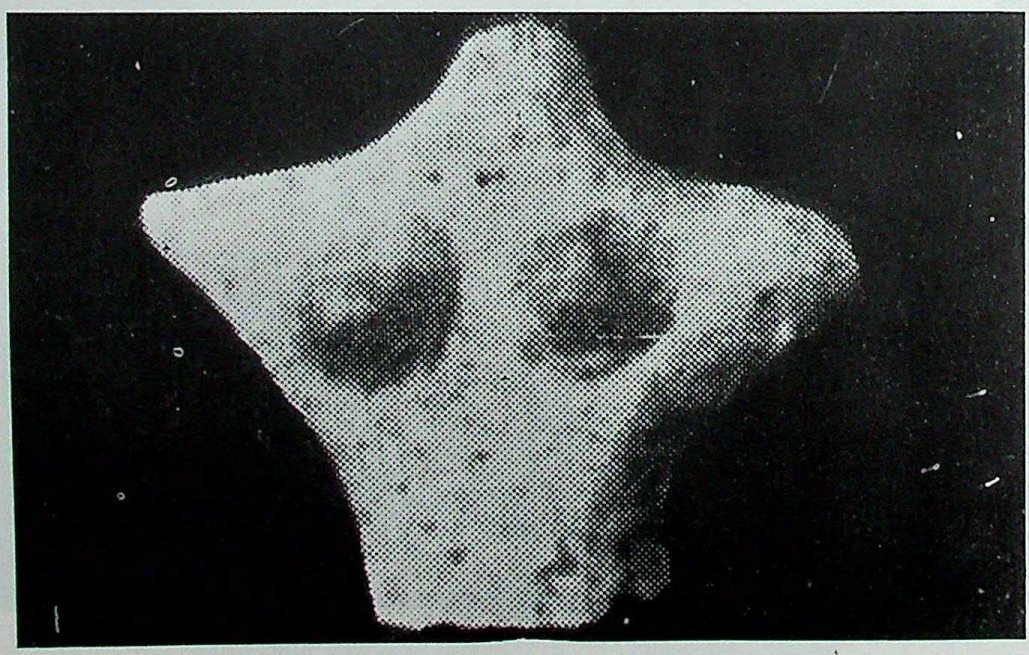


Pl. 26. Disc stone or ring stone, showing three figures of Mother Goddess with snakehood head-gear and flanked by running stag and birds below, besides the palm tree, Murtaziganj, Patna.



Pl. 27. Bust of Mother Goddess figurine, terracotta, Oriup, Bihar.

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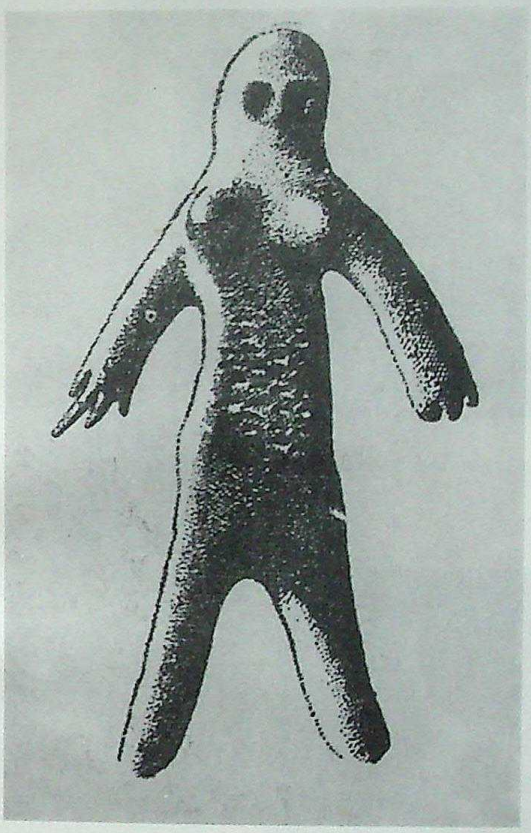
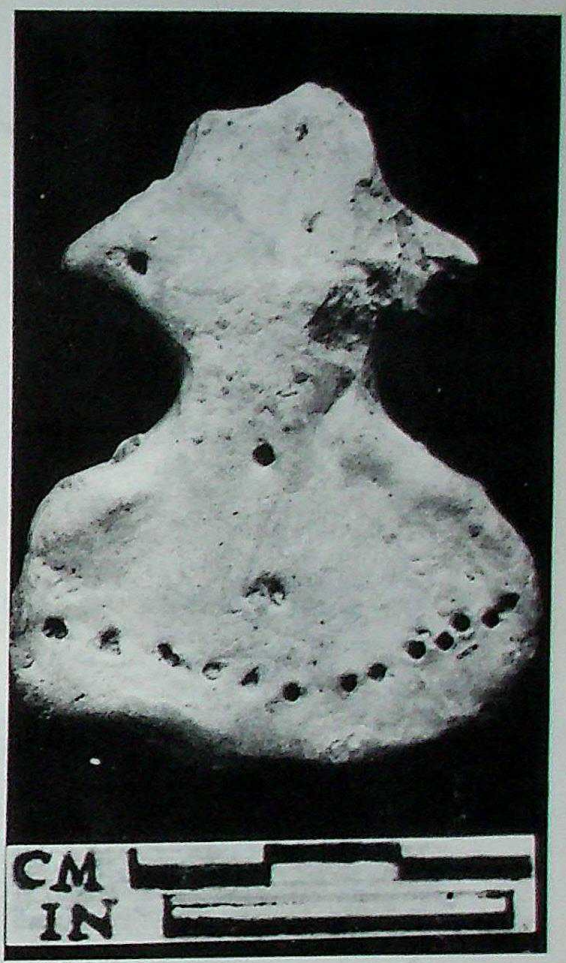


Pl. 28 Applique figure of a Mother Goddess over a storage jar Phase IV, Navadatoli.



Pl. 29. Violon shaped Mother goddess, Hulas.

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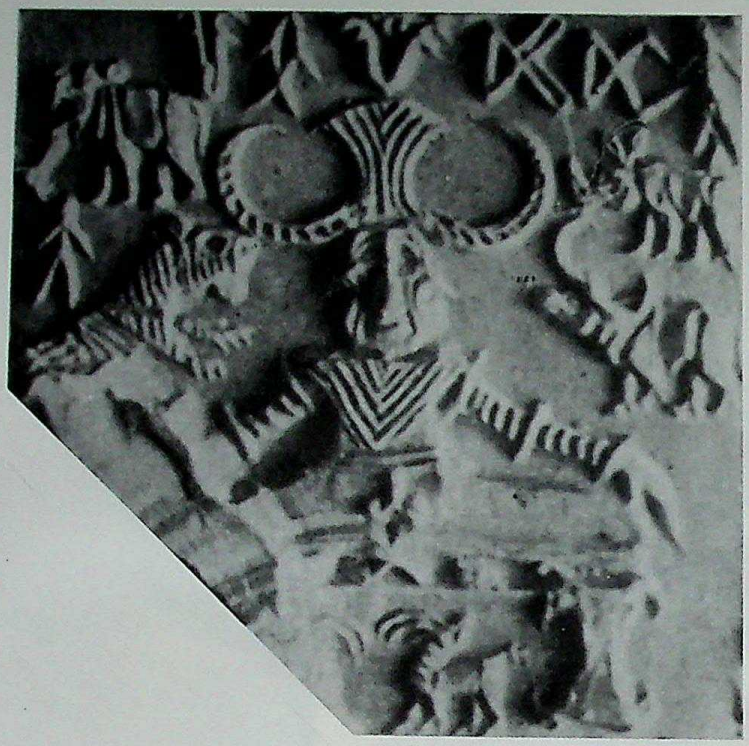

Pl. 30. Śiva-Paśupati, seated in Yogie posture surrounded by wild animals, Mohenjodaro.

Pl. 31. Śiva Paśupati, seated in Yogāsana, Mohenjodaro.

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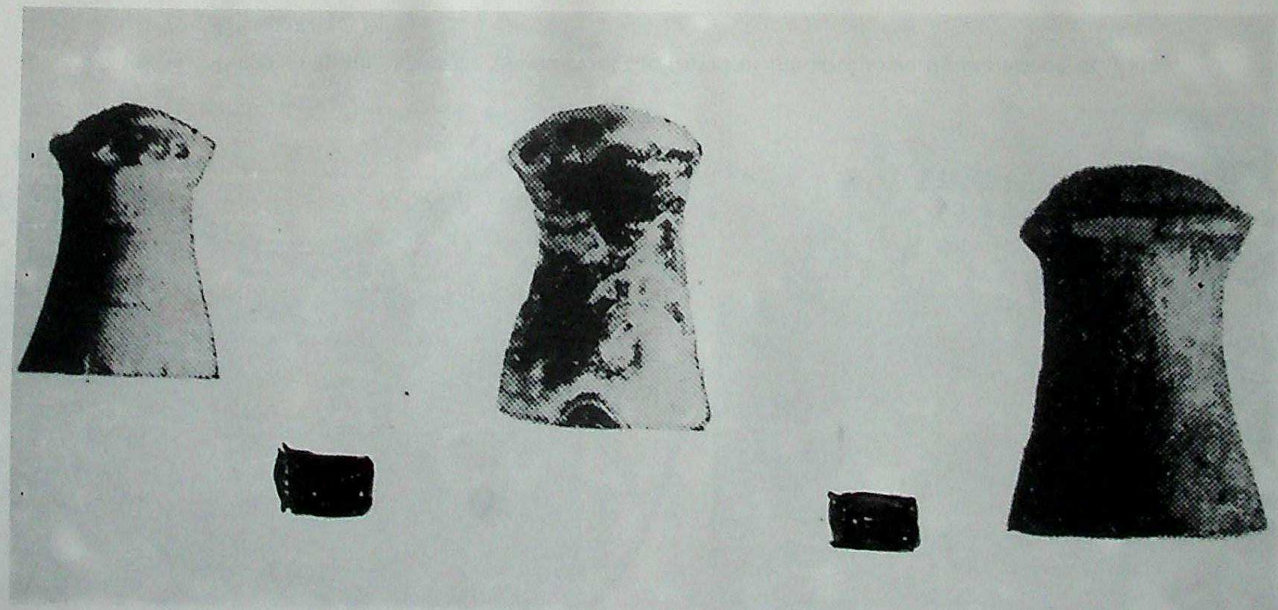
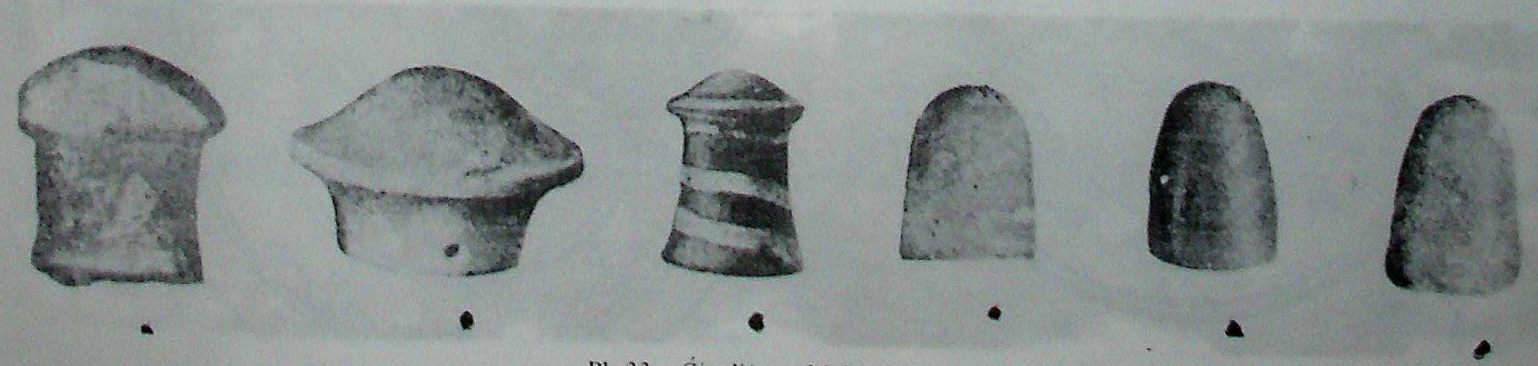


Pl. 32. Śivalingas, Kulli culture, Baluchistan.



Pl. 33. Śivalingas, Mohenjodaro.

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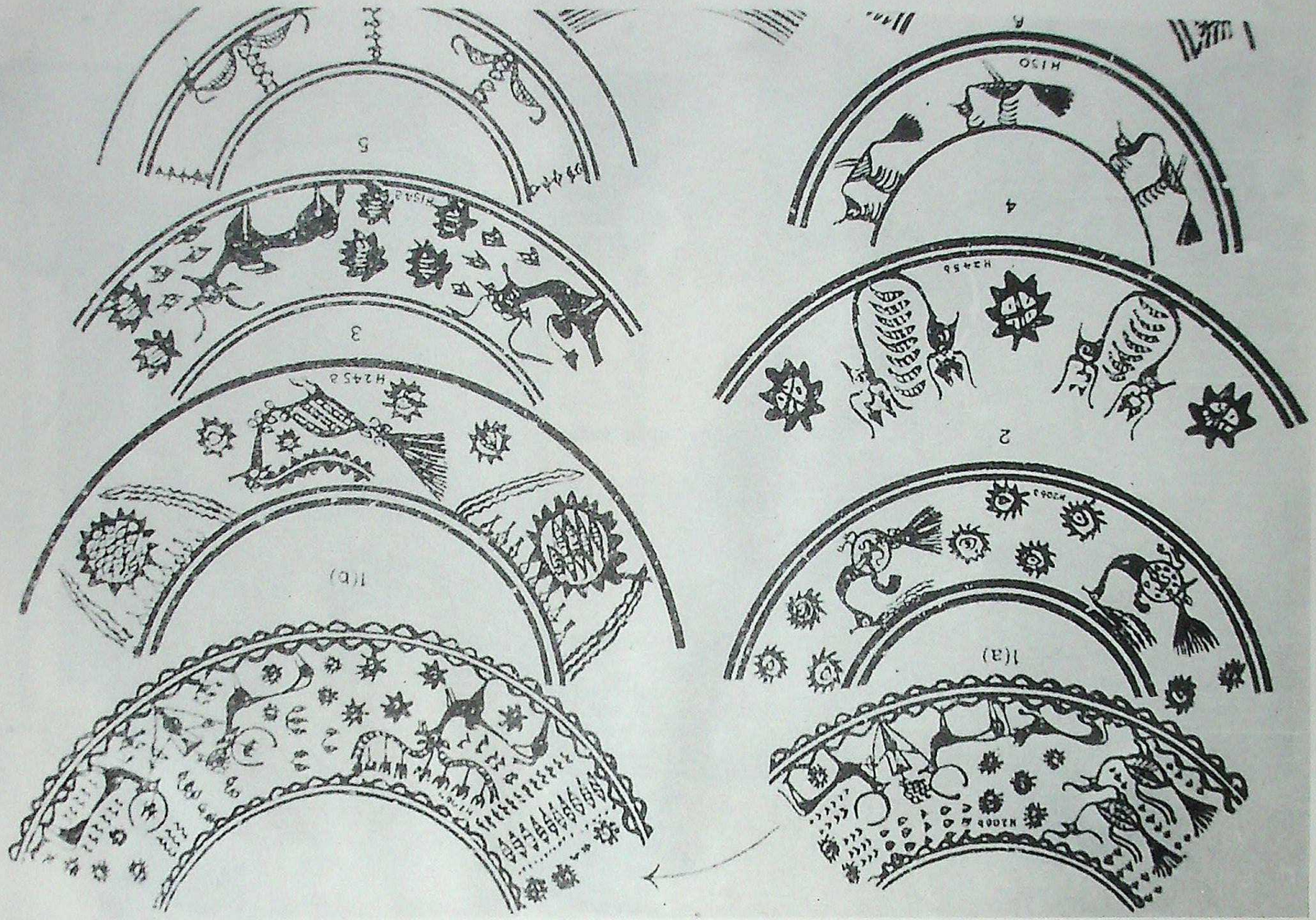

Pl. 34. Pottery painting showing the story of the travel of the soul towards the abode of Yama, Harappa.

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Pl. 35. Tree with unicorn motif, Mohenjodaro.

Pl. 36. Three headed animal, Mohenjodaro.

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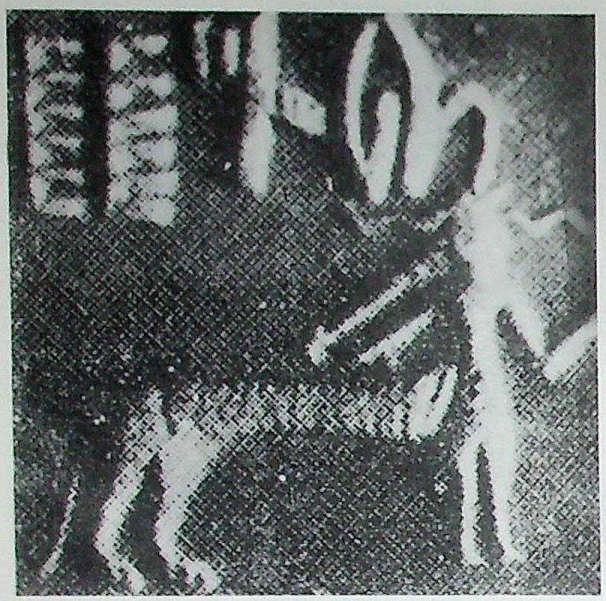
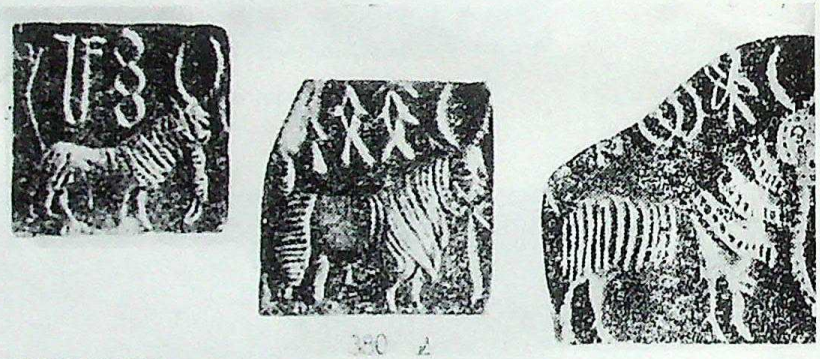


Pl. 37. Composite deity having half woman and half lion's body.



Pl. 38. (a)-(c) Composite animal figures, Mohenjodaro.

Pl. 39. Composite animal figure, Mohenjodaro.

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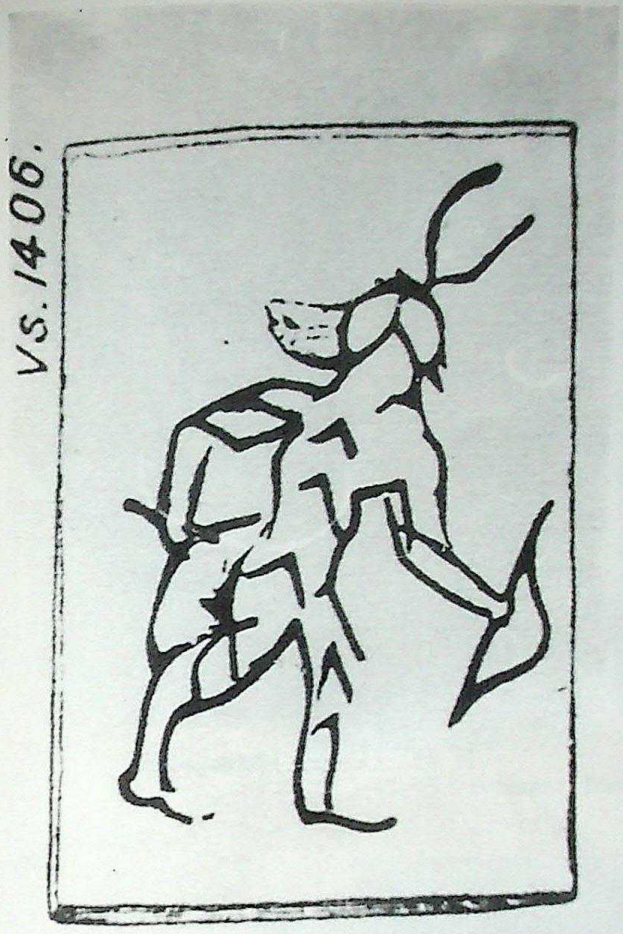

Pl. 40. Composite animal figure with bull's head and horns, Mohenjodaro.

Pl. 41. Composite human figure with tail and horns. Mohenjodaro.

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Pl. 47. Humpless Bull, Mohenjodaro.

Pl. 48. Humped Bull, Mohenjodaro.

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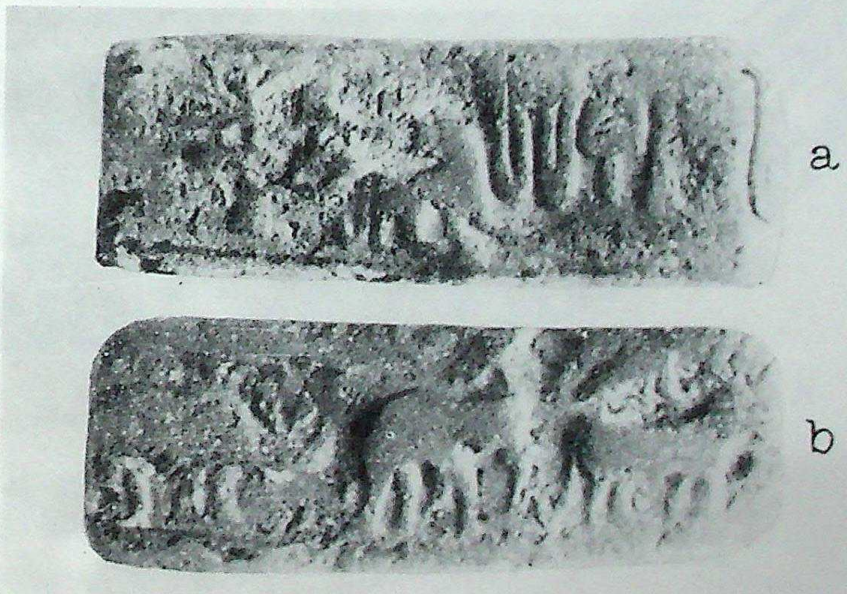
Pl. 49. Seal from Mohenjodaro showing two human figures carrying uprooted trees, which has been interpreted to represent the legend of Yamalārjuna, Mohenjodaro.



Pl. 50. Amulet showing some religious scene with rhinoceros, an elephant, and urus bull, Mohenjodaro.

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Pl. 51. Male figure fighting the tigers on either side, Mohenjodaro.

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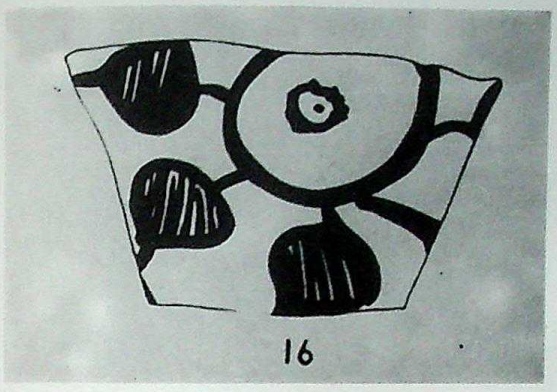
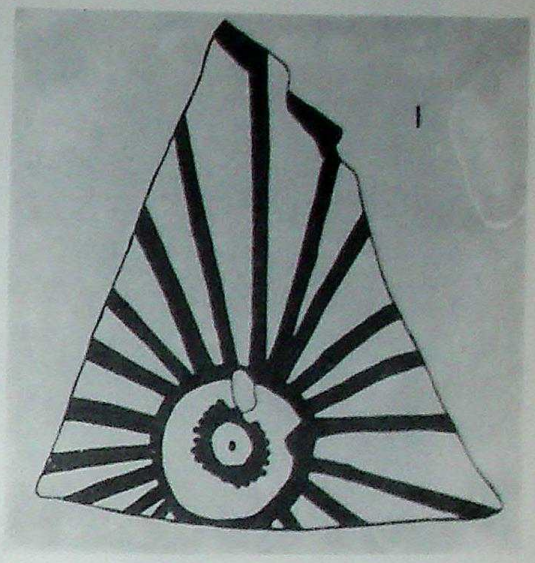


Pl. 52. Solar symbol on pottery, Chanhudaro.



Pl. 53. Solar symbol on pottery, Chanhudaro.

Pl. 54. Solar symbol on pottery, Chanhudaro.

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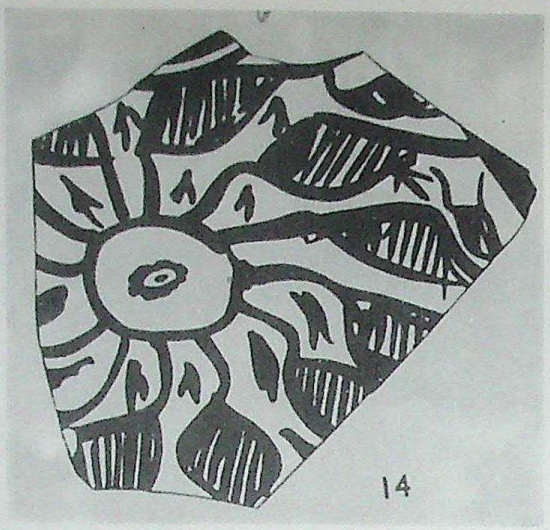
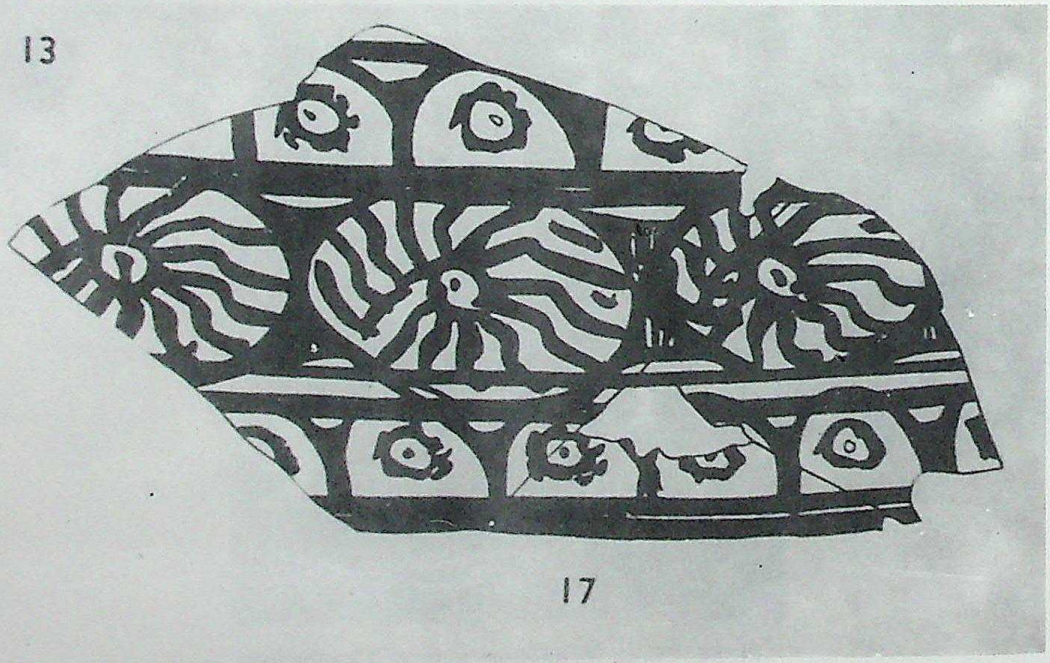


Pl. 55. 56. Solar symbol on pottery, Chanhudaro.



Pl. 57. Solar symbol on pottery, Chanhudaro.

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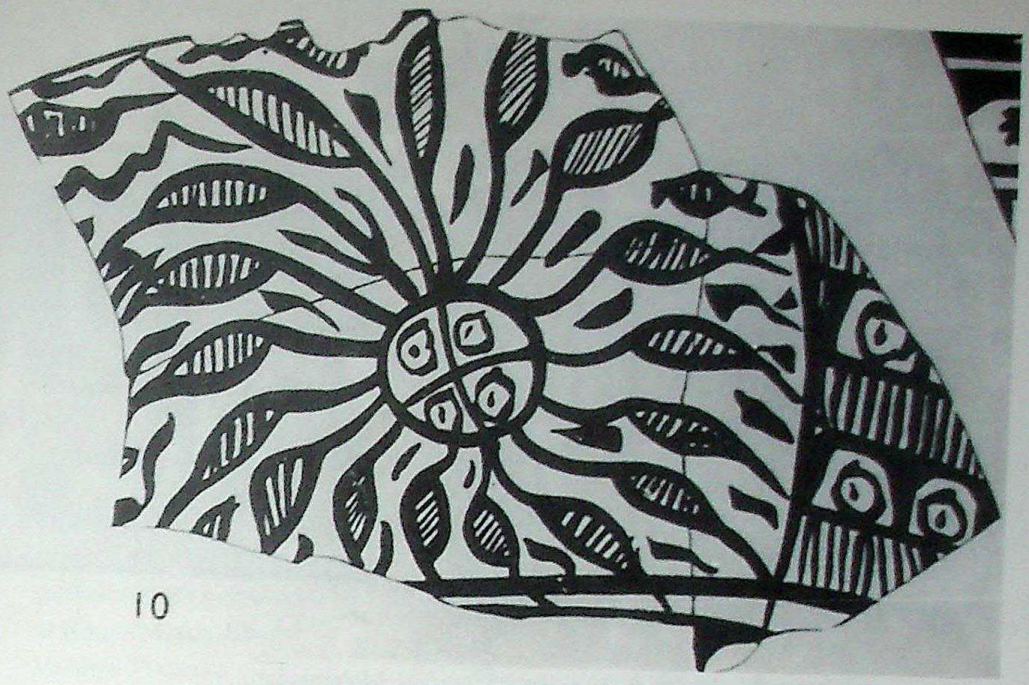
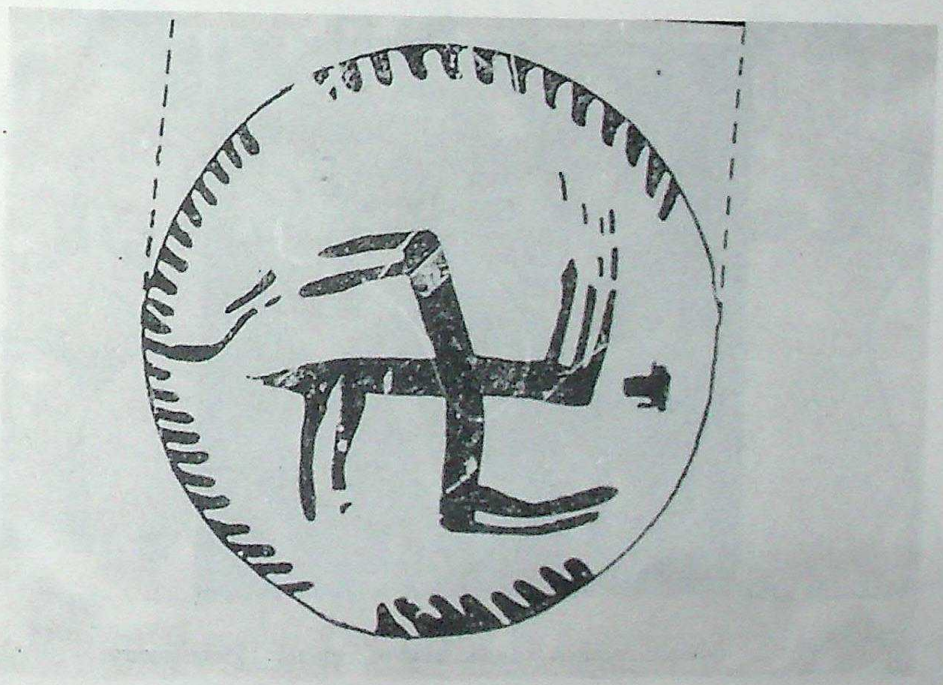


Pl. 58. Solar symbol on pottery, Chanhudaro.



Pl. 59. Svāstika symbol, Mohenjodaro.

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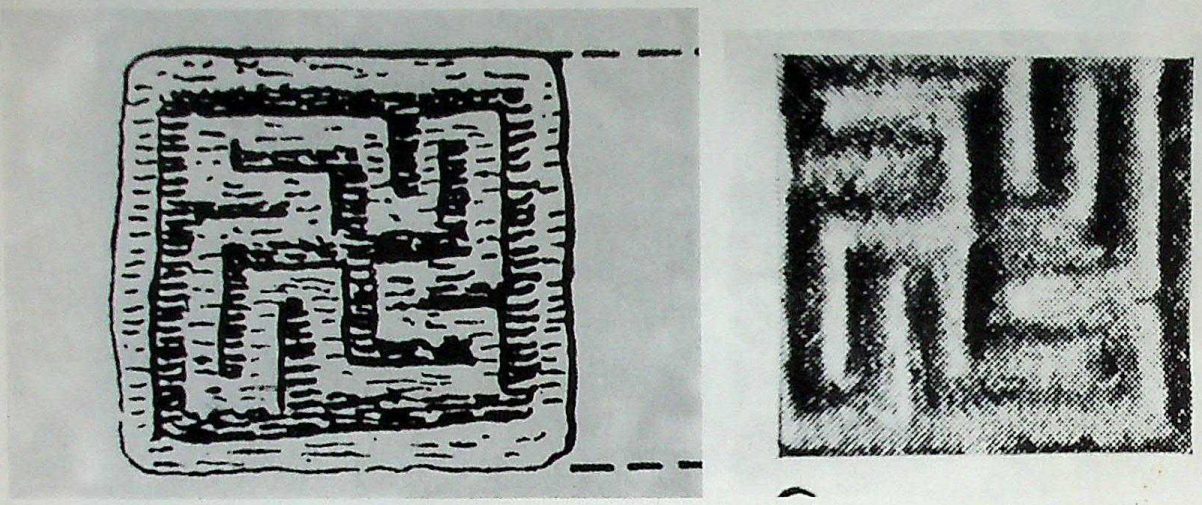
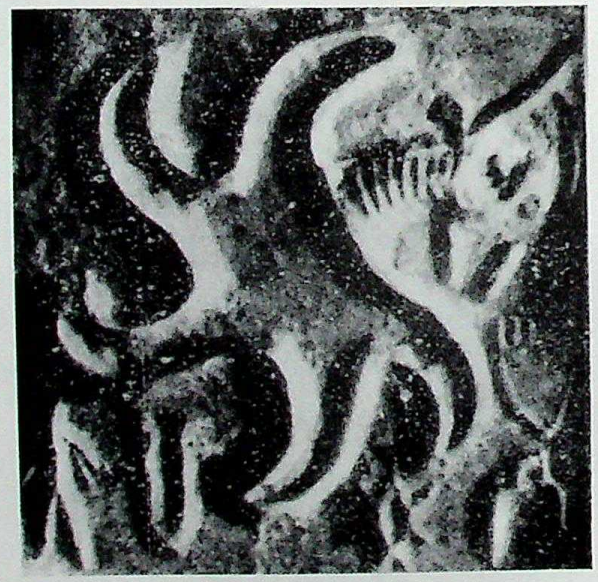


Pl. 60. (a) & (b) Svāstika symbol, Mohenjodaro.



Pl. 61. Svāstika symbol with the head of a unicorn, Mohenjodaro.

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Figures

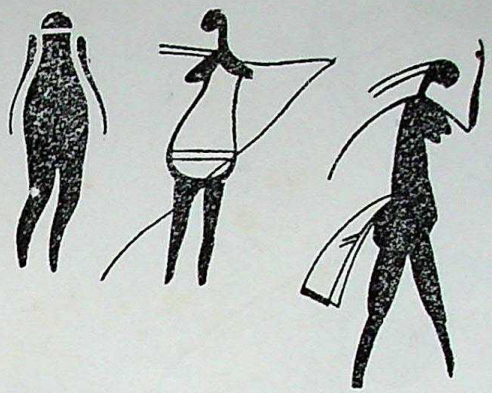

Fig. 1. Female figurines showing developed breasts and pregnancy from the prehistoric rock shelters at Bhim-Betaka, Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh.

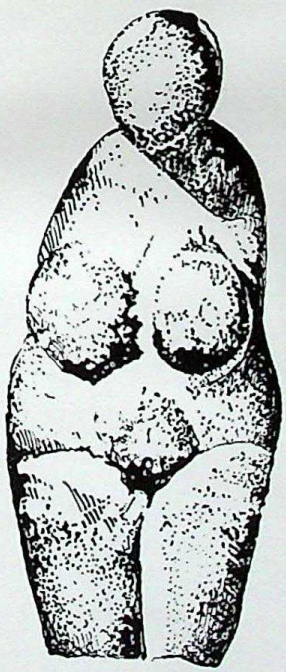

Fig. 2. Steatite Venus, Grimldi Caves, Balzi Rossi, upper Palaeolithic.

Fig. 3. Venus from Dolni Vestonice (Moravia), upper Palaeolithic.

Fig. 4. Nude female standing with horn of a buffalo held in raised right hand, Laussel, Dordogne (France), Palaeolithic.

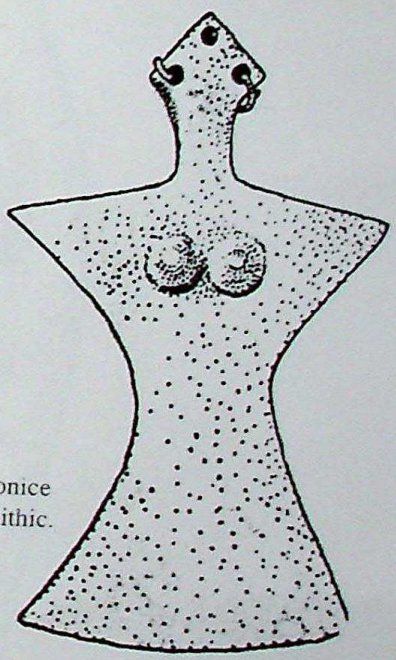

Fig. 5. Stylized alabastar Mother Goddess figure with copper rings fixed in the holes over the head, Hissar-III, Iran, 3100 B.C.

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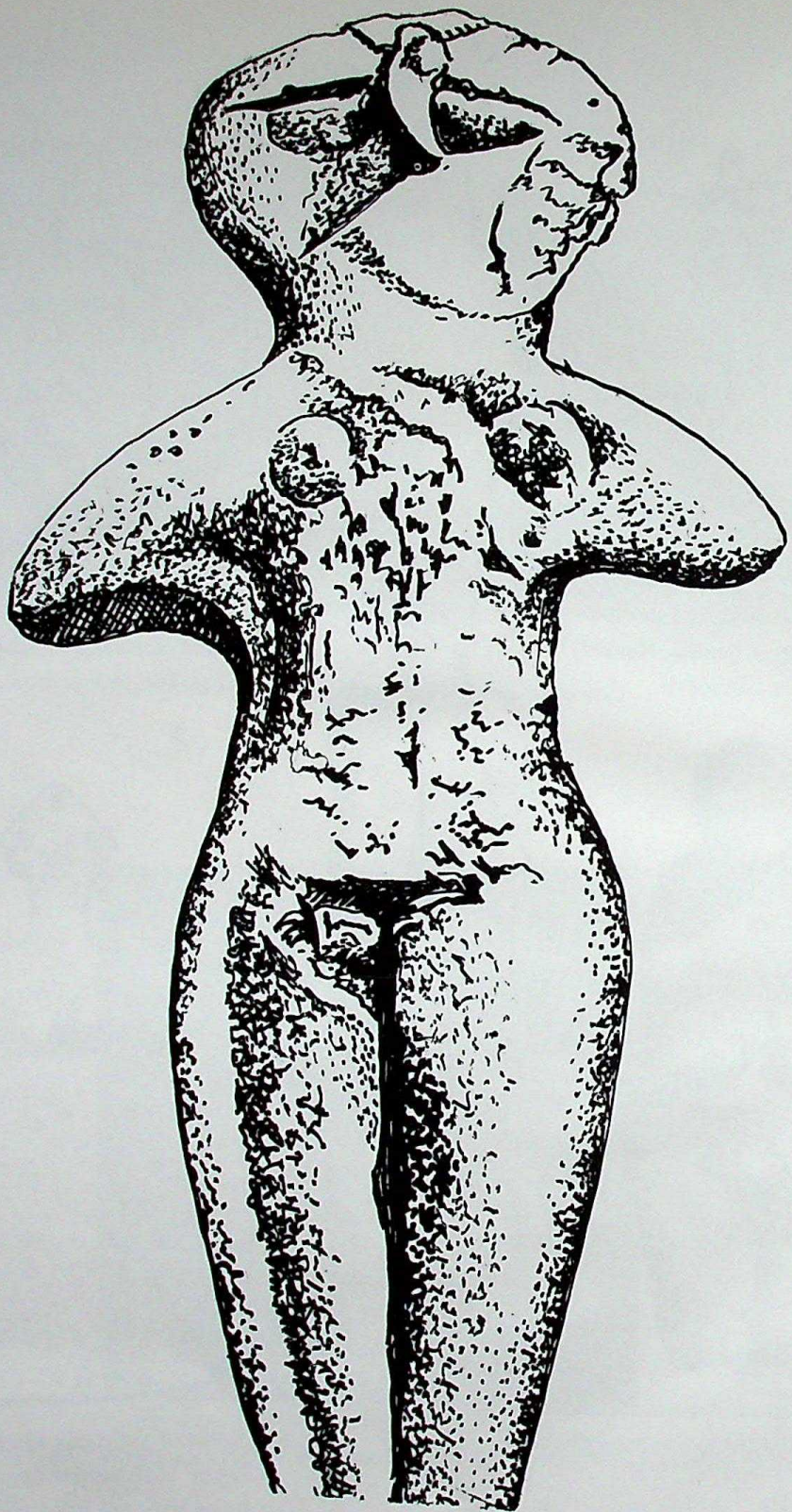

Fig. 6. Owl shaped Mother Goddess. Apollo Museum, Baghdad, 3500 B.C.

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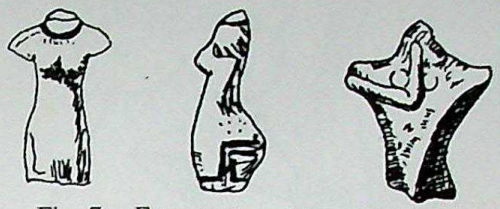

Fig. 7. Fragmentary terracotta female figurines, Namazga-I.

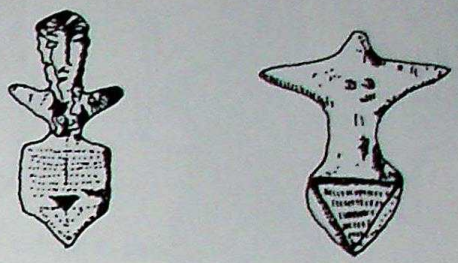

Fig. 9. Terracotta female figurines, Namazga-IV-I, Bronze Age.

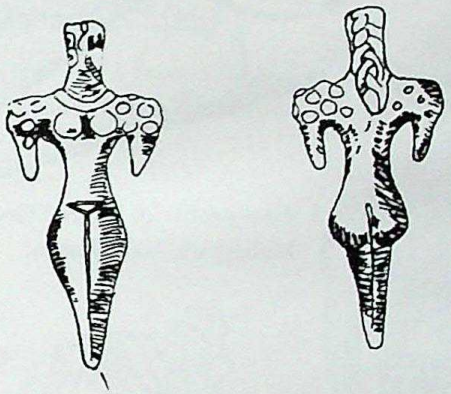

Fig. 8. Terracotta female figurines, Namazga-II, Karadipi.

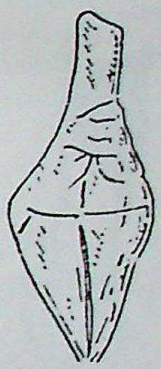

Fig. 10. Terracotta fragment of a female figure, Mehrgarh, Baluchistan.

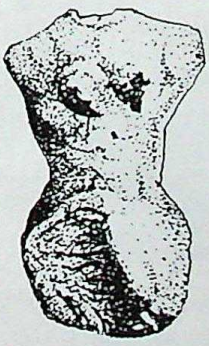

Fig. 11. Torso of a female figurine, Mundigak, Baluchistan.

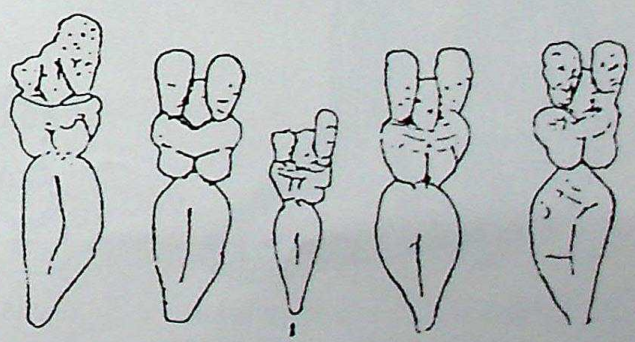

Fig. 12. Terracotta figurines of Mother carrying a child, Mehrgarh, Baluchistan, 3500 B.C.

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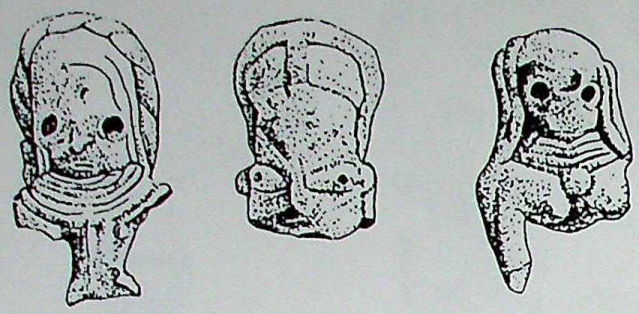

Fig. 13. Terracotta figurines of Mother Goddess, with eyes like sockets, Zhob valley, Baluchistan, 3000 B.C.

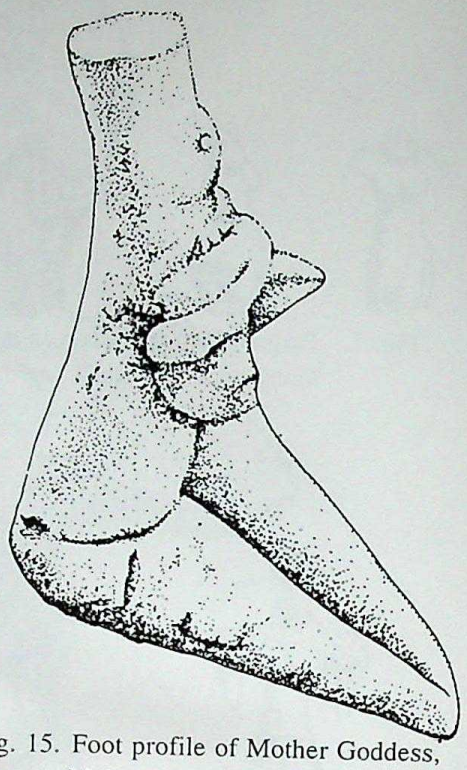

Fig. 15. Foot profile of Mother Goddess, Mehergarh, Baluchistan.

Fig. 14. Foot profile—a terracotta female figurines, Gumla, Baluchistan.

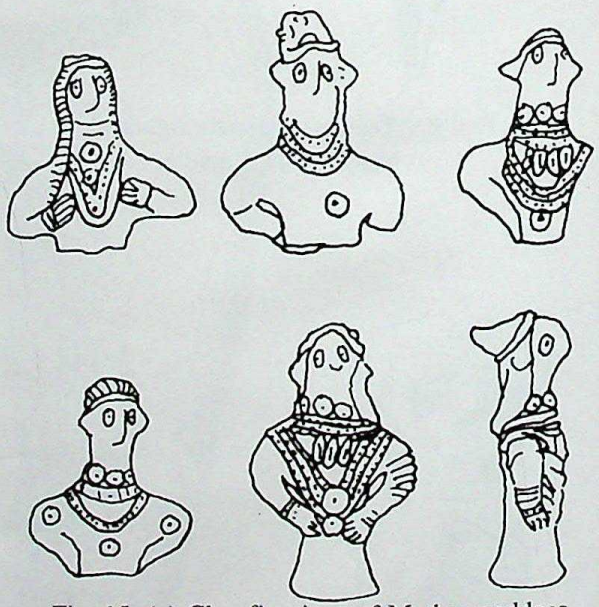

Fig. 15. (a) Clay figurines of Mother goddess, Kulli, Baluchistan, 3000 B.C.

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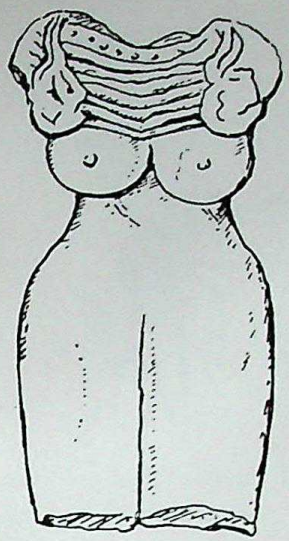

Fig. 16. Bust of a female figure, Damb Sadat, Baluchistan.

Fig. 17. Terracotta figure of Mother Goddess caressing an infant, Harappa.

Fig. 18. Terracotta Mother Goddess, with fan shaped head-dress, Harappa.

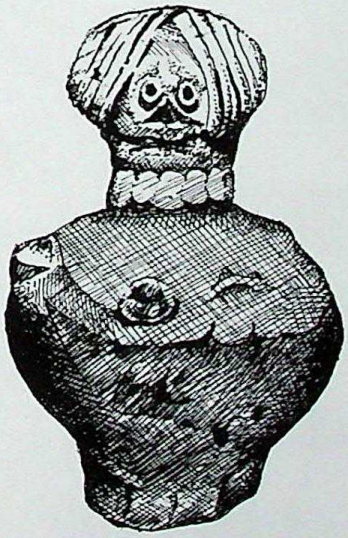

Fig. 19. Terracotta Mother goddess with pot belly, Chanhu-daro.

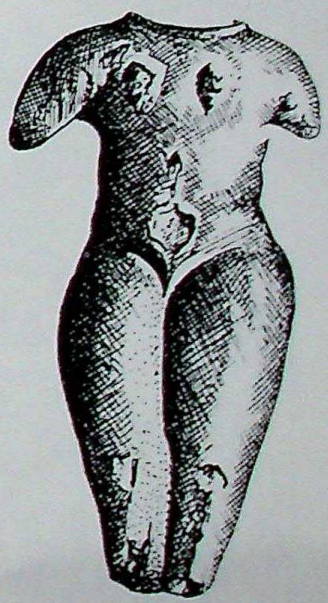

Fig. 20. Bust of a terracotta Mother Goddess, Taxila.

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Fig. 21. Bust of a terracotta Mother Goddess, Taxila.

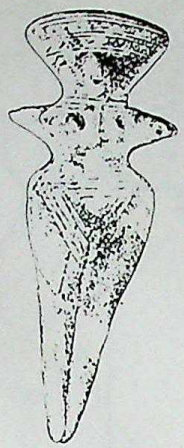

Fig. 22. Stylized figure of Mother Goddess in Ivory, Taxila.

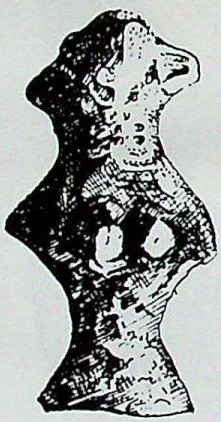

Fig. 23. Terracotta figure of Mother Goddess, Lothal.

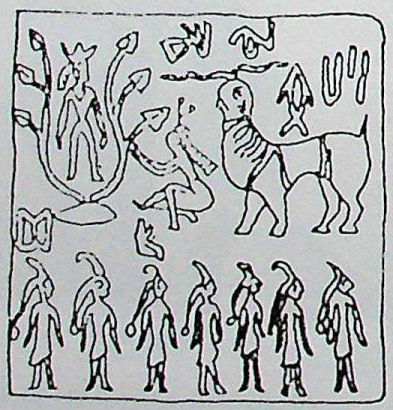

Fig. 24. Seal showing the Tree Goddess with seven ministerants, Mohanjodaro.

Fig. 25. Aditi or Lajja Gauri, Mahakuta.

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Fig. 26. Beautifully attired and richly ornamented Mother Goddess, Patna, Mauryan period.

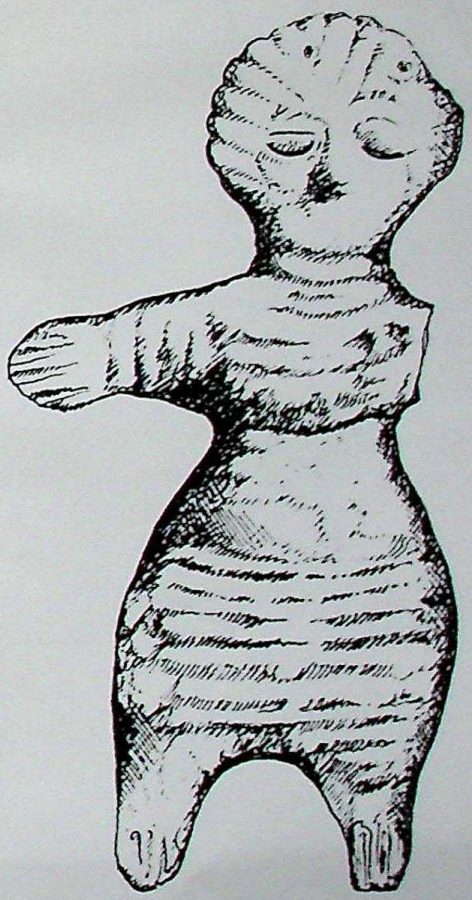

Fig. 27. Standing female figurine showing typical head-dress and costumes, Buxur, Mauryan period.

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Fig. 28. Female terracotta figurine adorned with beautiful head-dress and ornaments. One leg is missing, Buxur, Mauryan period.

Fig. 29. Terracotta female figurine, showing typical head-dress and ornament, Mathura, Early Kuṣana.

Fig. 30. Terracotta female figurine with parrot like head, Mathura, Early Kuṣana.

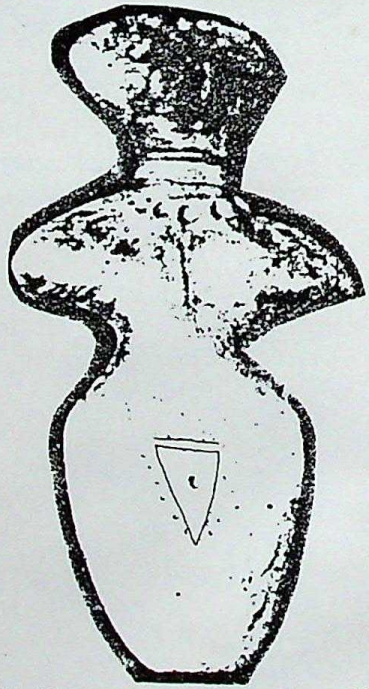

Fig. 31. Terracotta female figurine with pelvic triangle prominently shown, Mathura, Kuṣana period.

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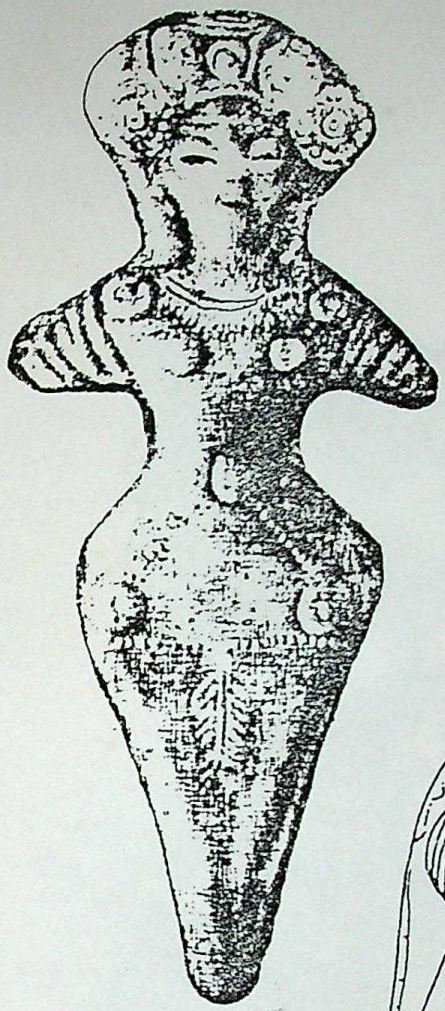

Fig. 32. Terracotta female figurine showing beautiful head gear, Mathura, Kuṣana period.

Fig. 34. Terracotta female figurine, with elaborate head-gear and costumes, Mathura, Kuṣana.

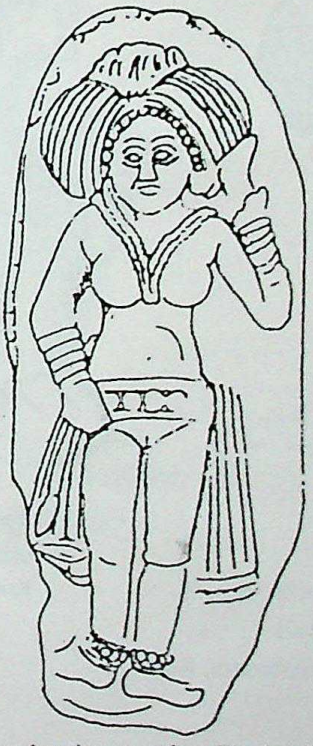

Fig. 33. Terracotta female figurine showing a turban like head-dress, Sonkh, Mathura, Kuṣana.

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Fig. 35. Bust of a terracotta figurine, with beaded headgear, Sonkh, late Kusana.

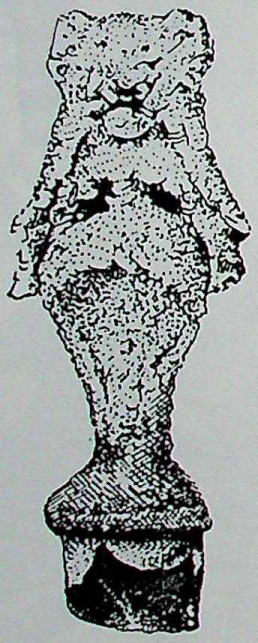

Fig. 36. Mother goddess figurine, bronze, Ropar.

Fig. 37. Terracotta female figurine with elaborate head-dress and costumes, Kosambhi, Mauryan period.

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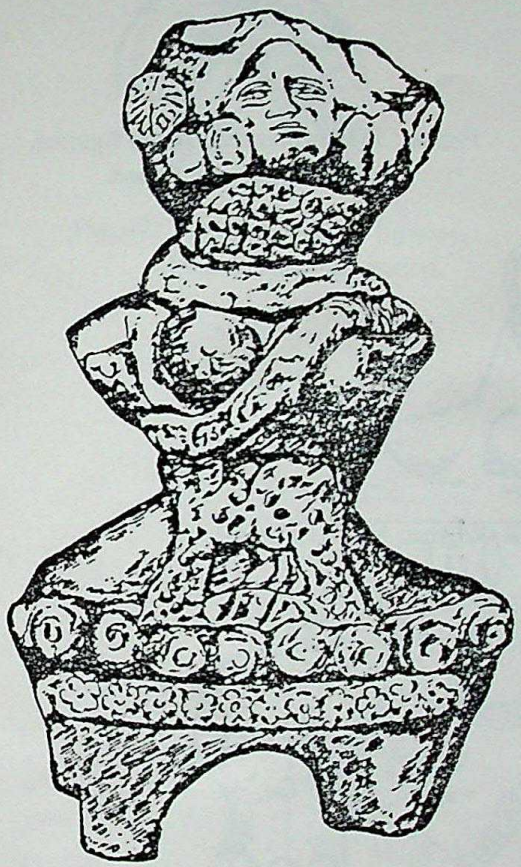

Fig. 38. Terracotta female figurine with elaborate head-dress and costumes, Kosambhi, Mauryan period.

Fig. 39. Fragmentary terracotta female figurines, Kosambhi, Mauryan period.

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Fig. 40. Bust of terracotta female figurine, Rajghat, Mauryan Period.

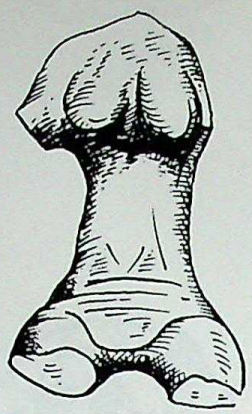

Fig. 41. Fragmentary terracotta figurine, Rajghat, Mauryan period.

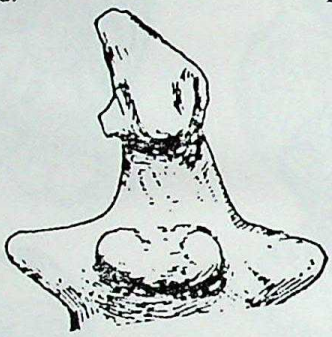

Fig. 42. Fragmentary terracotta figurine, Rajghat, Mauryan period.

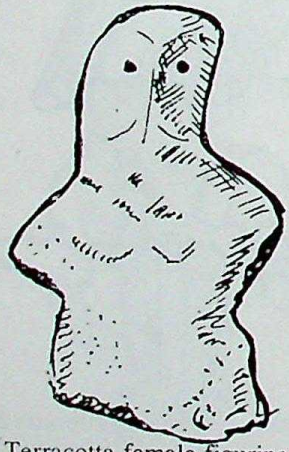

Fig. 43. Terracotta female figurine, Anguccha, Rajasthan, Kuṣana period.

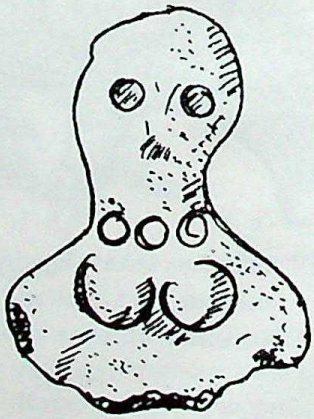

Fig. 44. Terracotta female figurine, Anguccha, Rajasthan, Kuṣana period.

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Fig. 45. Terracotta female figurine, Vaisali, Mauryan period.

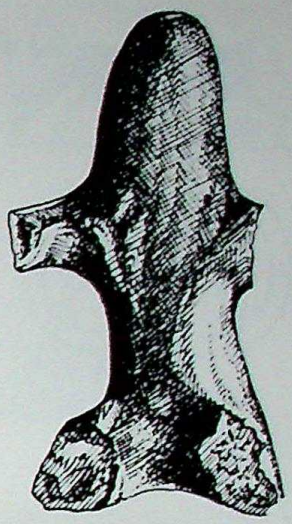

Fig. 46. Terracotta female figurine, Vaisali, Mauryan period.

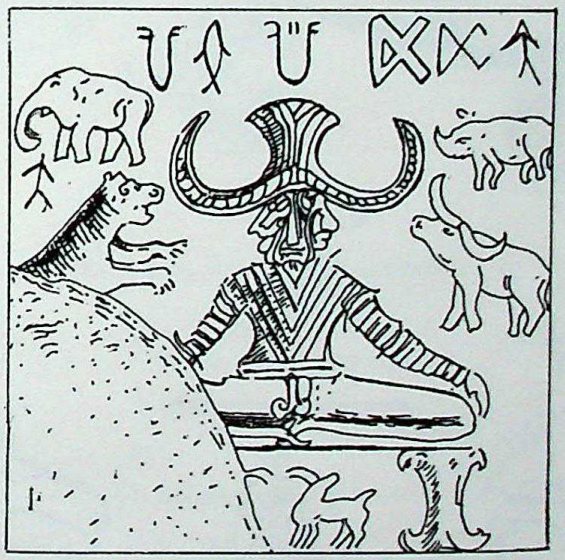

Fig. 47. Seal showing Siva, Paśupati, seated in Yoga posture, Mohenjodaro.

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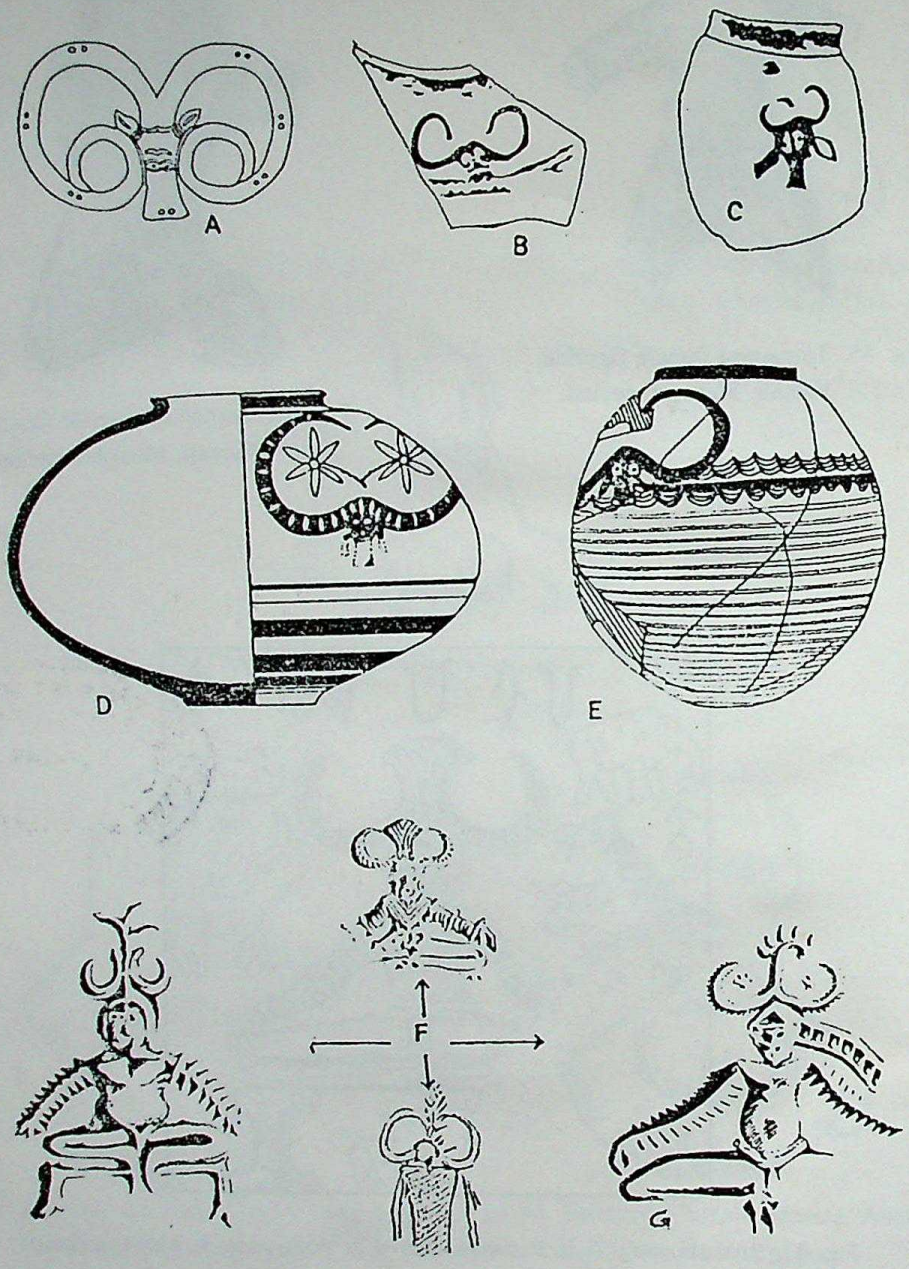
Fig. 48. Pottery and seals showing horned head-dress of Śiva:-



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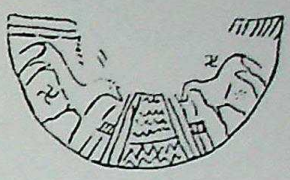

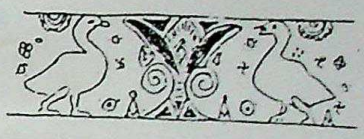

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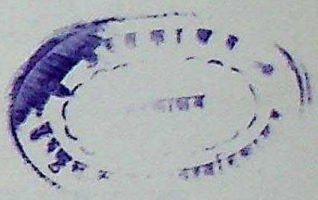

Fig. 49. Pottery with Svāstika symbols:-

(1) Grecian vase.

(2) Grecian geometric vase.

(3) Grecian geometric vase.

(4) Grecian vase.

(5) Rhodian vase.

(6) Cerveri Itali· n.

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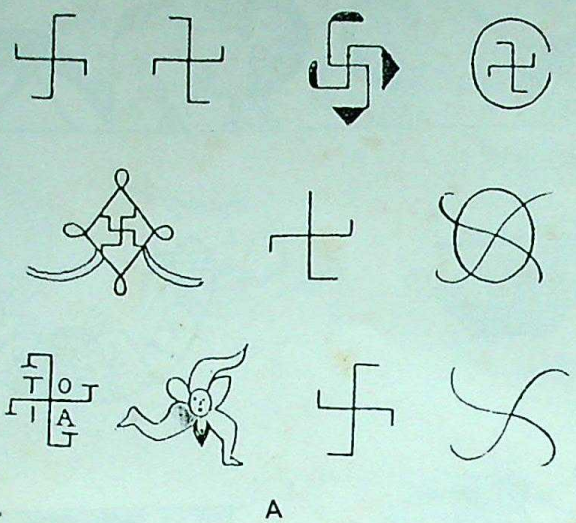
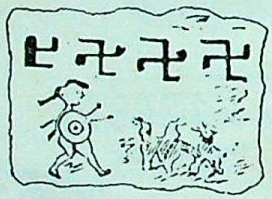


A



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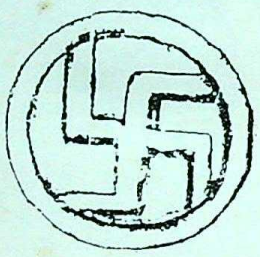

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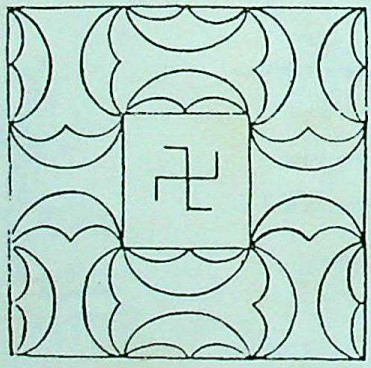

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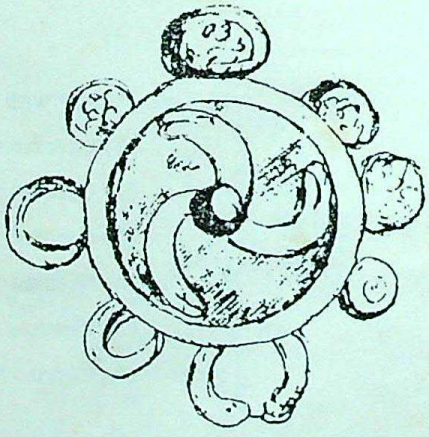

E

Fig. 50. Svāstika markings.

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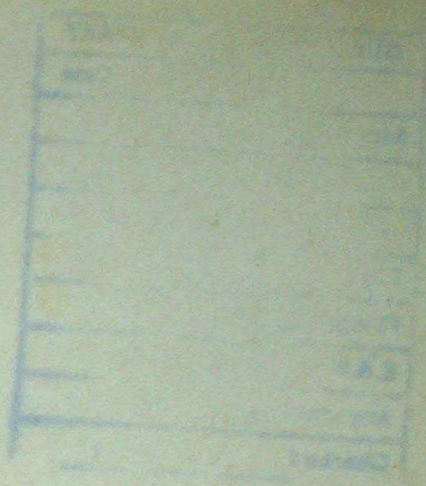

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...ate of the Punjab University, ...l capacity in the Central Asian ... New Delhi, the Archaeological Museum, Nalanda, and the Archaeological section of the Indian Museum, Calcutta for a number of years. He has to his credit the scientific documentation of over fifty thousand antiquities, in these museums, representing the rich cultural heritage of the country and comprising of sculptures, bronzes, terracottas, beads, seals and sealings, ancient Indian numismatics, wood work, miniatures and paintings, textiles besides the Pearce collection of gems, ranging from the earliest times to the late medieval period. He was awarded in 1987 a Fellowship for his monograph on the Temples of Himachal Pradesh by the Indian Council of Historical Research, New Delhi. The glimpses of the author's Works are provided hereunder:-

(a) Published works
- (1) The Universal Mother
- (2) Temples of Himachal Pradesh
- (3) The Indian Monoliths
- (4) Protection, Conservation and Preservation of Indian Monuments
- (5) Working Manual and Field Works Code-3 volumes, of the Archaeological Survery of India.
- (6) Mahiṣāsuramardinī in Indian Art.
- (7) Composite Deities in Indian Art and Literature.
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(c) Works coming out in series
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(d) Translation Works in English
- (i) Krttivasa Ramayana (Bengali) Already published
- (ii) Madhava Kandali Ramayana (Assamese) In Press
- (iii) Girdhara Ramayana (Gujarati) "
- (iv) Adbhut Ramayana (sanskrit) "
- (v) Ananda Ramayana (sanskrit) In pipe line
- (vi) Fourteen other Ramayanas of regional languages

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